

THE UK'S BEST INDEPENDENT PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE

P5W

■ PLAYSTATION WORLD

■ ISSUE #048 ■ £3.99 WITH DVD

The background of the cover is a high-contrast, black and white photograph of a muscular man, likely a professional wrestler, looking upwards with a determined expression. His chest is bare, and his shoulders are broad. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of his muscles.

**SMACK
DOWN!**
HERE COMES THE
PAIN

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Set your clock for midnight. 21.11.03



PlayStation 2





NEED FOR SPEED
Underground



Challenge Everything

PSW CONTENTS



THE BEAUTIFUL GAME!

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PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3
Is this the complete player or
the start of a career decline?



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RATCHET AND CLANK: LOCKED AND LOADED
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compare with Jax and Dexter?

**WORLD
EXCLUSIVE!**
FIRST WWE
SMACKDOWN!
REVIEW!



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**WE'RE
PLAYING IT!
STOP! OR MY
SQUADDIES
WILL SHOOT.**



048 DESTRUCTION DERBY Bangers and crash.



026 GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM Soak up the atmosphere of the Great Outdoors, then shoot people in the head.



046 SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY Nazi-nobbling high in the sky.



008 SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW Goggle-eyed jungle rival to MGS3.



088 WRC3 It's neck-and-neck between this and Colin McRae 04.

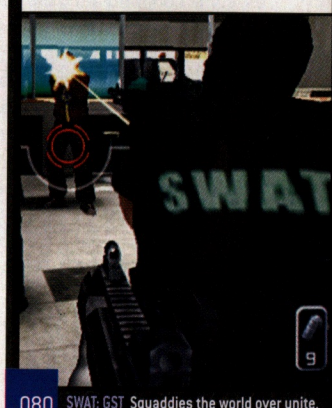


038 SONIC HEROES Can it recreate the halcyon days of 1991?



ON YOUR DVD

THERE'S 50 GAMES ON THIS MONTH'S PSW DVD. THAT'S AN AWFUL LONG TIME TO SPEND WATCHING GAMES ON YOUR PS2 INSTEAD OF PLAYING THEM. WHICH ONES SHOULD YOU SEE FIRST? TAKE A LOOK HERE TO FIND OUT. WE RECOMMEND THE RATHER TASTY EXCLUSIVE METAL GEAR SOLID 3 TRAILER, FOLLOWED BY A CLOSE UP LOOK AT TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND.

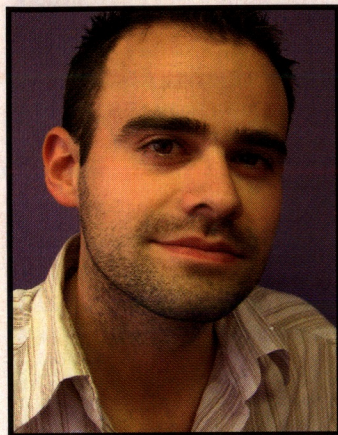


080 SWAT: Global Strike Team Squaddies the world over unite.

"You've touched me in a place that no human hand has (not counting my own)."

Editor's Letter

Not crying, just wiping something from his eye.

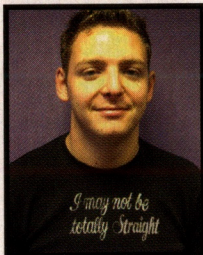


Frankly, dear PSW reader, you've touched me deeply. Touched me in a place that no human hand has (not counting my own) since the time I found myself trapped in a lift with a member of the Roman Catholic clergy, who told me in no uncertain terms that if I didn't grant him *carte blanche* to run free through the hairy wildness contained within my BHS boxers, he'd dress me up as Aled Jones and buy me a one-way ticket to the nastiest suburb in the roughest circle of Hell. I digress. This sudden surge of emotion has been brought about by the phenomenal response to issue 47. Because while we had some idea that the mighty PSW army had grown significantly over the past few months, we had no idea by just how much until we opened our mailbag to find thousands – literally thousands – of letters, some thanking us, some congratulating us, some simply reminding us how much you love us. You also branded a certain ex-writer "a fat version of the bloke from CHiPs" and took the piss out of Brownie for wearing a woolly hat during the hottest months of the year, but we're going to let those two slide. The important thing is that we're here for each other during these, the formative years of our much-loved console. So come 'ere you big lug. Sob.

Lee Nutter
Editor

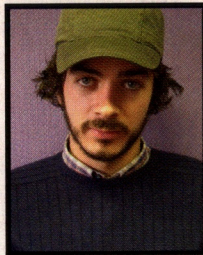
Meet the team

Boiling up opinion soup in the plastic kettle of knowledge.



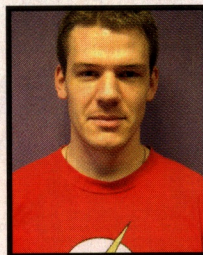
Richard Melville
Deputy Editor

Melville was at the centre of an international brouhaha this month during a trip to Denver when an anonymous developer at a leading studio attempted to start a fight in a small local bar. If we're honest it wasn't that big a deal. We just get moderately aroused by seeing the word "brouhaha" in print. It's just so damn curvy.



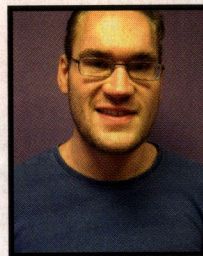
Jon Brown
Features Editor

[Jon Brown walks into a hat shop] "I'd like to buy a hat please." [Hat vendor] "Certainly sir. You have a fairly large head, don't you?" [Brown] "Funnily enough, yes, I do. How did you know that? You must have a sixth sense or something. [Pause] Actually, you probably just looked at it and saw that it was quite big, didn't you?" [Hat vendor] "Yes."



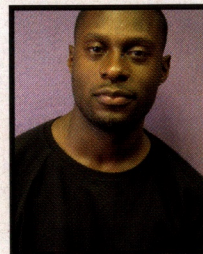
Jon Todd
Senior Writer

Bad news: after months of suffering and despite the best efforts of his doctors, former Staff Writer Mark Robins sadly lost his fight with that really big bear this month and has been buried at the bottom of the PSW garden in a giant matchbox. Good news: his replacement Jon Todd is superior in every respect. Get in.



Joff Brown
Staff Writer

No sooner was the ink dry on the final page of our *Mark Robin's Book of Condolence* than Joff was pillaging his desk for objects of worth. "Does anyone want these Post-It notes? And do you think his mum will want his old wallet? And what about his reading glasses? I could make a couple of quid on these." He did as well.



Curtis Phillips-Cozier
Art Editor

Curtis isn't at work today. In fact, he hasn't been in all week. Which means a) there's loads of work for him to do when he gets back, and b) we can send emails from his computer to other people in the office without him knowing. "Dear Simon Hassell, I don't usually do things like this but I was wondering if you'd like to meet me...."

EDITORIAL

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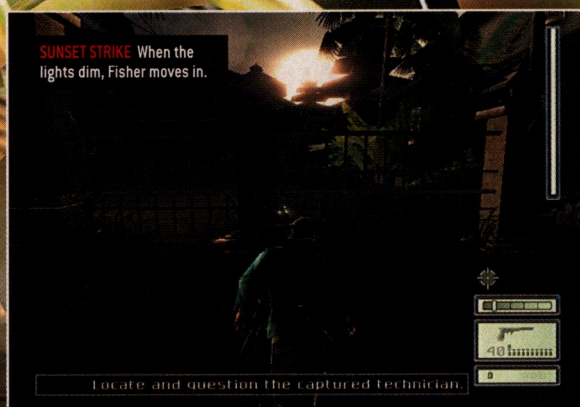
ATARI

GLOBAL

A NAILBOMB OF NEWS AND OPINION EXPLODING FULL IN YOUR FACE.

GLOBAL this month...

- 10 Mission Impossible
- 11 SOCOM 2
- 12 Battlestar Galactica
- 13 Castlevania
- 14 Onimusha 3
- 14 Manhunt



FISHER, MAN

PANDORA'S BOX OF DELIGHTS

SPLINTER CELL'S SAM FISHER IS BACK ANOTHER GAME OF HIDE-AND-SNEAK.

SOLID SNAKE IS IN HIDING. HE'S JUST SEEN THE TRAILER FOR *Pandora Tomorrow* on this month's PSW DVD, and suddenly he's not feeling so cocky. Those of you who've already felt the full force of our explosive footage will understand why. Because it would seem that for the first time in his life, Snake's position is in serious jeopardy. Fisher's back, and this time he's not pissing around.

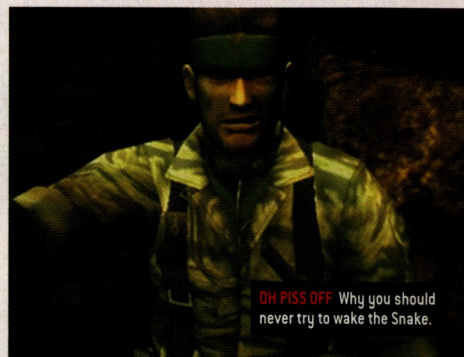
Most worrying for Snake is the first glimpse of *Pandora Tomorrow*'s mission-based Multiplayer mode, in which multiple Sam Fisher look-alikes scrap over who looks cooler in black and who looks the least stupid with those oversized goggles strapped to their forehead. Oh, and you probably sneak around in the shadows a bit and shoot each other too. New moves spotted include Sam hanging upside down from a beam by his legs so he's still able to shoot, and *The Matrix*-style gallop up a wall to do a backflip, presumably so he lands behind a pursuing enemy.

Think about multiplayer *Splinter Cell* for long enough and it sounds potentially fascinating. Imagine something like a *Metal*

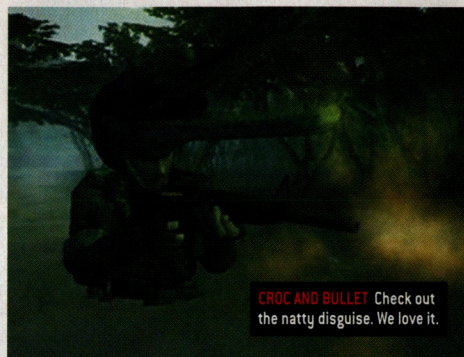
Gear Solid-style military installation with multiple Solid Snakes running round, intent on taking out the other side. You won't be able to play as Fisher, though; that's reserved for the single-player missions. We have a feeling that multiplayer might suit cowardly shits who prefer to sit tight in the shadows and wait for that one opportunity to cap an opponent. Ubi Soft hasn't confirmed the exact modes yet, but we reckon there's potential for some neat spins on the usual selection. Capture The Flag to become Capture The Hostage, anyone? Actually, that's the only one we can think of.

At present it's unclear whether *Pandora Tomorrow* is to be a full-blown follow-on to *Splinter Cell* or more of a semi-sequel in the same way that *SSX Tricky* was to the original *SSX*. In all honesty, it hardly matters. The presence of an all-new Single-player campaign set half in the jungle, half in the piss-stained slums of Indonesia is more than enough to get our juices flowing.

Pandora Tomorrow should be sliding into the welcoming crevice of your PS2 in March of 2004. Stay with us for progress reports.



OH PISS OFF Why you should never try to wake the Snake.



CROC AND BULLET Check out the natty disguise. We love it.

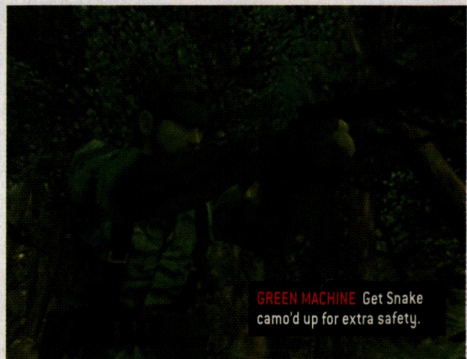
SNAKEBITE

SOLID SNAKE TRASHES TOKYO

METAL GEAR MADNESS IN THE FAR EAST AS SNAKE GETS BIG IN JAPAN

KONAMI WOWED VISITORS TO THIS YEAR'S TOKYO

Games Show with the first showing outside of London of the latest *Metal Gear Solid 3* trailer. The five-minute teaser, last seen at the trade show ECTS back in August, offers action fans their most in-depth look yet at what they can expect from *Snow Eater*, a jungle-based stealth 'em up that takes the basic principles of the *Metal Gear* series so far (noise is bad, strangling is good) and smothers it 100% pure Rambo juice. PSW is pleased to offer you your own copy of the footage to study at your leisure. So if you haven't already done so, we'll excuse you a second while you commandeer the closest DVD player to go and take a look. And make sure you've got the volume turned right up. The Shirley Bassey-esque soundtrack is one of the funniest things you'll hear this month (NOTE: this statement was calculated using data taken from a really boring person who doesn't usually hear much funny stuff over the course of the average calendar month). Unfortunately, Konami is keeping its powder dry when it comes to releasing exact gameplay details at present, so revelations are thin on the ground this month. Never you mind. You just kick back and get your teeth into that trailer while we scour the world looking to unearth yet more exclusive info. We'll get back to you in four weeks.



GREEN MACHINE Get Snake camo'd up for extra safety.



YOU LITTLE HUNT

ETHAN HUNTS FOR SPLINTER CELL'S CROWN

IF ONLY WE COULD CALL IN THE **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE** TEAM EVERY TIME OUR PS2 HIT US WITH A DISC READ ERROR.

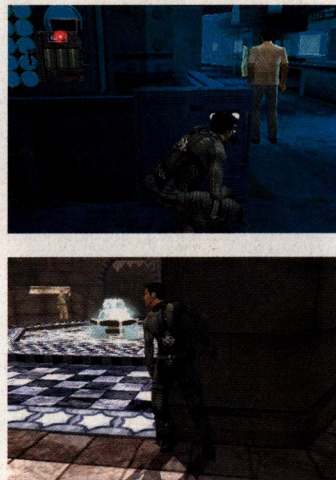
WELL, HE DOESN'T LOOK MUCH LIKE THE Cruiseinator. For one this Ethan Hunt isn't a short-arse, and for two he sports a perm of David Hasselhoff proportions. But then coming out three and a half years after the second film means Atari can hardly be gunning for movie tie-in territory anyway. *Mission: Impossible's* plot is similar to that of *M:I-2* in so far as it involves a virus, but here it's called ICEWorm and affects computers rather than people, giving its creator, Surma Corporation, control

over every computer in the world.

Let's not kid ourselves that this is anything but a *Splinter Cell* clone, though certainly a promising one with its cool range of gadgets. These include a tiny remote-controlled bug carrying a deadly sting, a microphone used to sidetrack guards, binoculars concealing a digital camera for snapping evidence, and EMP darts to take out electronics such as alarms. In fact, Atari promises you can play through levels pretty much as you like. Guards can be bumped off, snuck

past, distracted to another area, tranquillised, or even used as human shields if you're a sadistic bugger. Hunt can't quite rival *Splinter Cell's* Sam Fisher for stealthy and deadly finishing moves, but at least being spotted by enemies here won't provoke a rage against the machine that ends with your controller hurled against the nearest wall.

Operation Surma is due out in early December, but we'd strongly advise you to wait for PSW's definitive review before you hand over your cash.



DIGITS THE MONTH IN NUMBERS.



149

The total number of review points garnered by games reviewed this month, making it the highest scoring issue of PSW ever. Who says developers are running out of ideas?



31

The number of PSW readers who've written in over the last four weeks to tell us they think that developers are running out of ideas. See above, losers, then have a re-think.

7.7

The average review score of games reviewed this issue. Which means that whatever game you decide to buy this month, it's bound to be OK. [Please note: offer excludes *Super Farm*, reviewed on page 94. For obvious reasons.]

64

The percentage of games featured in this month's preview and review section that feature large amounts of death, guns and violence. Is it any wonder you keep getting those sharp impulses stabbing through your brain like hot knitting needles ordering you to hurt the closest human with an asymmetrical haircut? Frankly, no.

13

The number of minutes Browns Joff and Jon spent talking about the jumbo box of Wotsits sent into the office earlier in the year to promote a *Jurassic Park* game that neither of them could remember. Sigh. Happy days.

3

The number of shoulder buttons broken already by the R1-heavy *Pro Evolution Soccer 3*.

2

The number of abusive emails we've had this month from angry relatives of British shot-putter Mark Proctor reminding us that the athlete is still a better human being than Lee Nutter. You can stop now. We get it.



S.O.C.O.O.L.

SEAL OF APPROVAL

YOUR PS2 IS SET FOR ANOTHER EAR-BASHING THANKS TO SOCOM 2.

LIKE A BUSTY BOOTH BABE HIRED AT A GAME show to draw jaded journalists to a stand, *SOCOM*'s voice-activated headset for bawling instructions to team mates was a novelty attraction, the appeal of which vanished without trace after a couple of hours in its company. Coupled with an ultra-stinky Single-player mode, it was a classic case of a missed opportunity.

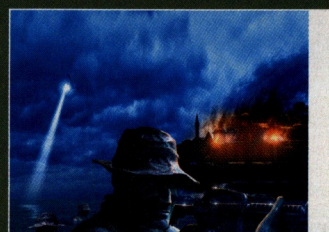
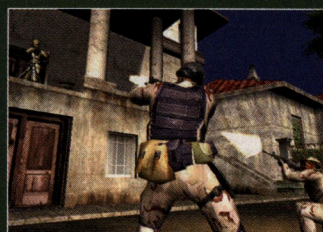
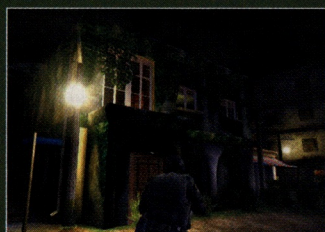
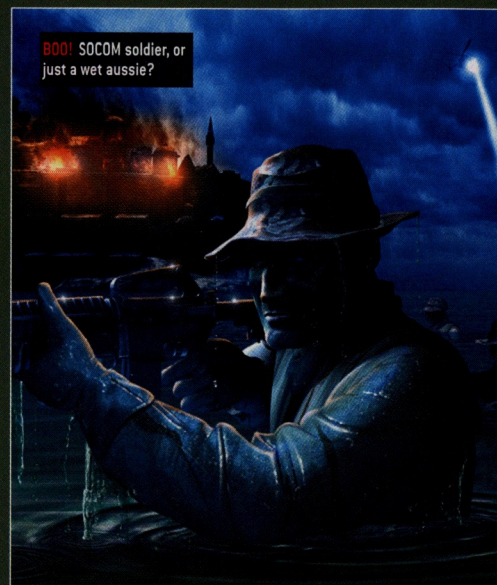
Once again you lead a four-man SEAL team over 12 new missions against the most despicable terrorists countries such as Albania, Brazil and Russia have to offer. There's a better balance of indoor and outdoor levels this time around, with a ship, a jungle stronghold, and a desert cave fortress taking advantage of some new weather conditions and day and night effects. Help comes from our own SAS, as well as the Russian Spetznaz,

though if the enemy's accuracy from a distance of two yards is anything like it was in the first game, they won't be seeing much action.

Far better is the Multiplayer mode, which again supports up to 16 players and sports two new self-explanatory modes called VIP escort and Breach. Ten out of the 12 online maps from the original have been updated too, joining a dozen brand new ones for a total of 22.

The original just about worked because it was the first proper online combat game. But things have changed rapidly in the last six months and we're now seeing more and more military-based shooters promising near enough the same thing. *SOCOM 2* stands up to be counted early next year, but will it stand out anymore?

PSW SAYS
SEE PAGE 14



HILL BE BACK

SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN

SILENT HILL TO HIT THE BIG SCREEN.

UTTER SHITE: STREET FIGHTER, DOUBLE DRAGON, SUPER Mario Bros., Tomb Raider 2. Passable in a six-pack-and-pizza kinda way: Mortal Kombat, Wing Commander, Final Fantasy. Pretty damn good: um, er, some people quite liked Resident Evil, didn't they? We're talking movies here people. Do keep up.

Bearing all of this in mind, a *Silent Hill* movie doesn't have an awful lot to live up to, especially if you've seen any of the above turkeys and your expectations are low. The film's credentials aren't bad though, with *Brotherhood Of The Wolf* director Christophe Gans at the helm. Konami is also on hand to hopefully make sure the script, monsters and sound effects do justice to the frankly arse-trembling games.

The superficially similar *Alone In The Dark* movie will come out first, but given that it's from the people behind the woeful *House Of The Dead* and features Christian Slater in the lead role, it's unlikely to present too much of a problem.



OOOH, SISTER This'll make Nurse Melty into a major pin-up. Just you wait and see.

PSW SAYS
SEE PAGE 14



INFECTIOUS

VIRUS ALERT

WE WANT ONLINE RESIDENT EVIL: OUTBREAK.

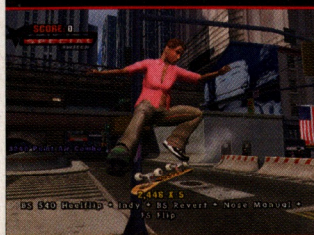
THE TOKYO GAME SHOW BROUGHT WITH IT THESE new screens and a smattering of new info for this brave (or foolhardy) attempt to take *Resident Evil*'s rigorously single-player game online. Oh yeah, except the release date and online bit still aren't confirmed for PAL countries – and that's us unfortunately.

Taking the role of one of eight normal (that's 'normal' as in you're already affected by the zombie-making bio-virus when the game begins) Raccoon City citizens such as a copper, a doctor or a reporter, the idea is to get the hell out before your vocabulary is

reduced to repeating the word "brains".

Trading items, healing characters or lending a shoulder to help them walk all benefit you in some way, while a so-called 'ad-lib' chat feature can turn a throwaway remark to another character about your situation into a full conversation about the puzzles.

Even if the four-player online play doesn't make it over here, *Outbreak* bears all the hallmarks of a classic *RE* game. It's terrifying, funny, gory and probably as frustrating as ever. Come on. You wouldn't want it any other way.

PSW'S
10 MOST
WANTED**1. TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND**

It's really hard and we want to touch it right now, but mummy Activision says we're not allowed. Not until next month anyway. Still, abstinence makes the prong grow longer.

2. LORD OF THE RINGS: ROTK

Our heads have been inflated to basketball size this month by a thin wind of hype blown at us from internet movie sites. Like a pregnant porn star, we're top-heavy and expectant.

3. DRIVER 3

Carried up seven places on the shoulders of a surging scum of PSW readers, who beat at our door after last month's feature in the hope of jarring loose more info.

4. MAXIMO 2

How much do we want to play *Maximo* 2? Roughly twice as much as you'd like to see Frank Bruno riding in the 3.40 at Chepstow on a nag named Frankie, Do You Remember Me?

5. BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

How much do we want to play *Beyond Good & Evil*? Roughly half as much as you'd like to see Frank Bruno riding in the... you what? Oh. You get the point.

6. TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

We're still excited about this one, just not as excited as we were when it was encased in the glass of early development and we weren't able to play it.

7. GRAN TURISMO 4

Polphony – you don't write, you don't answer the phone, you don't send us flowers, you don't respond to our bomb-threats. So you're in seventh place. You've made us do this.

8. METAL GEAR SOLID 3

(Whispers) Is anyone else concerned that *Snake Eater* might just turn out to be a tiny bit, like, rubbish? If we wanted to catch wild animals we'd go badger baiting with our mate Fat Lee.

9. GHOST RECON: JS

The JS above stands for *Jungle Storm*. It's just that we didn't have space to write *Jungle Storm*, so we had to abbreviate it. Only once we'd had a meeting to discuss it, obviously.

10. KILLZONE

It remains just a small mountain of speculation, but we're still planting a flag bearing the inscription 'PSW said this would be good before anyone else did' at *Killzone*'s summit.

**STAR STRUCK**

GALACTICA GETS BATTLE STARS

OLD-SCHOOL CELEBS FLOCK TO VOICE **BATTLESTAR GALACTICA** AS IT CRUISES ON PS2.

WE'VE GOT OUR HANDS ON THE FIRST PLAYABLE VERSION of space shooter *Battlestar Galactica*, and we've discovered that there's a throng of crazy voice talent doing the acting. Although the strategic blaster is set 40 years before the time of the TV show, several of the original cast members have returned to do voice work. As well as Dirk Benedict, who played a Han Solo-esque space pilot in the original series, the game also features the vocal talents of Dwight Schultz – AKA 'Howling' Mad Murdoch. That's half the *A-Team*, folks. It might be harder getting the whole team back together though, what with George 'Hannibal' Peppard being nine years dead and all. Still,



in the realm of video games, you never know. OK, so this time you do. Kristanna Loken, *Terminator 3*'s T-X, provides a bit more up-to-date voice-mongering as a female space jockey.

It's been an odd year for the sci-fi series that nobody really remembers. First *Usual Suspects* director Bryan Singer was going to turn it into an all-new TV series, but couldn't, and then it surfaced as a 're-imagined' telly show with a female lead. Sadly, there's no news on whether a film version will ever get the all-important greenlight, so fans may have to turn to the PS2 title as the only way to get an 'authentic' slice of the series. *Battlestar Galactica* is out at the end of November.

**BEYOND OUR KEN**

HADO-RYUKEN!

GIVE US SOME SUGAR BABY – IT'S **HYPER STREET FIGHTER 2**.

FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER ITS DEBUT ON home consoles, Capcom has decided the time (or the profit margin) is right to bring an anniversary edition to the PS2 early next year. Back in the early 90s, we would have defied anyone to go into any amusement arcade or sixth-form college in the country and not find a *Street Fighter 2* machine. Such is the game's popularity that it has sold over 27 million copies worldwide, and scientists have said that if you put them end to end, they'd probably stretch round the world, like, twice or something.

This collector's special will include all the characters who've ever appeared in the zillions of versions of *Street Fighter 2* games, as well as all the different moves. What does this mean exactly? Well, a super combo from *Street Fighter 2 X's* Ryu might counter a rapid light kick from *SF2's* Ryu, that's what.

Blinkered video games nostalgia is dangerous, we tell you, but in this case an exception might well have to be made. *HSF2* be out at the end of the year in Japan, so we're expecting the UK version to arrive around March 2004.



AAAH LOVELY Ken's dragon punch... a thing of beauty.



WIN A DVD PLAYER AND SOME DVDS AS WE PLAY...

HOW FAST? AND EXACTLY HOW FURIOUS?

FREE STUFF!

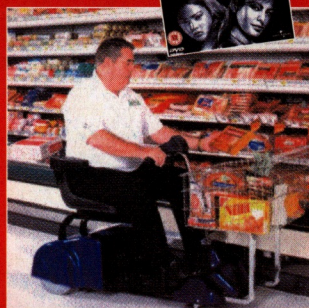


BEFORE WE GET TO THE GOOD BIT, the contractually obligated bit: *2 Fast 2 Furious* is out to buy (and rent) on DVD and (VHS) on October 27. All prizes courtesy of our friends at Universal Pictures Video. We really must have them over for cheese and wine some time. This month's competition winner receives a DVD player that looks like a car but is actually a DVD player, a copy of *2 Fast 2 Furious* and a movie poster large enough to cover over the embarrassing doodles of skyscraper-sized penises plastered all over their bedroom wall. Four miserable losers are told to get their entries in earlier next time and are sent away with the DVD and a poster.

To be in with a chance, simply study the photo provided, then choose exactly how fast and how furious you consider the four-wheeled fellow to be:

- A) Speed: 7mph – Furiousness: None
- B) Speed: 80mph – Furiousness: Loads
- C) Speed: 140mph – Furiousness: Loads and loads

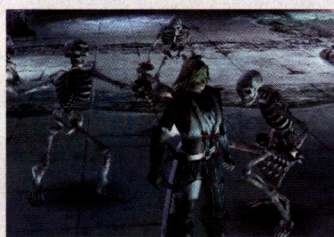
What do you mean you don't get it? OK, here's a clue. The answer starts with the letter A. Send all entries on a postcard marked, "I thought it said Home-baked biscuits" to the usual address. Alternatively, text "play" followed by 1, 2 or 3 (for A, B or C) to 85100. Usual competition rules apply. If you don't pay the bill, please ask permission before



texting. Text entries cost 50p. That's five packets of Space Raiders. Think about it. Any problems (is your jumper too tight?), email us at psw@smshelpdesk.com



PINK POUNDER Ask the nice armoured man to help you.



OUT FOR THE COUNT

FANGS FOR THE MEMORIES

SEE HOW IT ALL BEGAN IN THIS **CASTLEVANIA** PREQUEL.

WE'VE FINALLY SEEN JUST HOW GOOD

Castlevania: Lament of Innocence is. Armed with just a dagger to begin with, it's not long before you're fully whipped up and head off to explore five areas of Drac's abode: the cathedral, theatre, alchemist lab, garden and dungeon. Might not sound like a lot now, but when you're exploring the hundreds of rooms without a map you'll see how huge this game is.

Traps and monsters flood just about every room and corridor, so it's not long before the whip on its own becomes ineffective. Combine it with five sub-weapons such as holy water, or mix seven orbs with ten action relics and you have some powerful attacks. *Castlevania* is now due early next year, and with a few giggles ironed out before then, might well do justice to 17 years of gaming history.



GLOBAL INSIDER

CHUNKY BITES OF MEATY NEWS GOODNESS



GT MORE

While UK gamers won't see *Gran Turismo 4* until early in the new year [it's slipped, what a surprise!], PS2 owners in Japan will get the chance to play a preview version in December. *GT4 Prologue* will feature approximately half the final game, including new cars and courses, although online options are not thought to be included. Chances of a UK release: zilch.

ART OF SEDUCTION

How far would you go to avenge your father's death? In *Red Ninja: End Of Honor*, the warrior in question is prepared to take on an entire clan, seduce enemies to distract them, and even dislocate her joints to escape from tight areas. You go, girl. Her specialist weapon is a length of wire called the Tetsugen, which can be used to slice-and-dice depending on how long and taut it is and what's attached to the end.

LAME ACADEMY

In a month which sees the *Pop Idol* fragrance launch, Ubi Soft has snapped up the license to *Fame Academy*, smelling naive parental purchases a mile off. Apparently it's due out next month, which barely gives us time to review the damn thing. We'll never get a copy and, for the record, we never wanted that inbred Cornish pixie to win.

PSST PSX

Sony have announced a price for the PSX, a rather natty machine which houses a PS2, DVD recorder, hard drive, modem and satellite receiver. Costing either £450 or £550 in Japan (depending on how big you want the hard drive to be) the PSX will be released in the UK early next year. Expect to be able to play *GT4* online while recording Corrie at the same time. Your girlfriend will love it.

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE

After turning your trousers a darker shade of brown in 2003, Konami has confirmed that a *Silent Hill* sequel is in the works for late 2004. We know the following details: it will feature a male lead (possibly James Sunderland from *Silent Hill 2*) and the survival horror will once again take place in the troubled town of Silent Hill. Konami is keen to continue its reign over the horror genre but now faces stiff opposition from Sony's forthcoming *Siren* and Capcom's *Resident Evil: Outbreak*. We reckon the *Hill* will still come out tops.

>> NEW INFO <<



FRENCH FANCY Jean Reno. He kicks 'le ass'.

DEMON LOVER

WHIPPED INTO SHAPE

LEON HIMSELF TAKES TIME OUT FROM 'BEFRIENDING' NATALIE PORTMAN TO STAR IN **ONIMUSHA 3**.

WE'VE UNEARTHED MORE INFO ON *Onimusha 3*, the third and final instalment of the samurai-warrior-fights-demons series. The most promising character is Jaques Blanc, who you've probably noticed is modelled perfectly on *Leon* star, Jean Reno. Thumbs up from us straight away. Blanc's weapon of choice is a whip, which can snare enemies for mercilessly kicking the crap out of, and

catch arrows mid-flight if your timing is spot-on. It also has more puzzle-based uses too, such as collecting hard-to-reach objects. One of Blanc's finishing moves also sees him blasting a fallen demon with a pistol until it blows apart. Samanosuke's moves are largely the same as before, including the temporary shift into demon mode, except for a new charged attack. We'll see *Onimusha 3* next summer.

>> UPDATE <<



GUN CRAZY They're out to kill you. Just for ratings.

REAL NASTY

PASS THE SICK BAG

MORE INFO ON **MANHUNT**'S INHUMANLY FOUL ACTION.

HERE'S WHAT MANHUNT'S ALL ABOUT:

Rockstar is pitching its video nasty as a social satire of violence and our obsession with reality TV. Intriguingly, your actions must always satisfy an audience who are baying for enough blood to rival a splatter-horror movie, giving the game an open-ended feel as you improvise methods of murder. The more gruesome the killing, the greater the rewards are in the form of improved weapons, thus boosting your chances of survival.

Snatches of the game's story are also filtering through. You play James Earl Cash,

a convicted felon given what he believes is a lethal injection. Instead you wake in the run-down industrial area of Carcer City, with instructions being barked through an earpiece by the 'Director'. He's one Lionel Starkweather, a nasty bastard who tapes these manhunts for cheap thrills. With his heavily armed force, known as the Cerberus, guarding the city's perimeter fencing and the local cops in his pay, Cash's only source of help is a journalist eager to expose Starkweather.

Rockstar reckons it'll be ready by mid-November. We say "Ban this sick filth!"

PSW SAYS



SEE NO EVIL, PLAY NO EVIL

If the plug-sucking chimps responsible for the well-meaning dunder-brain that was *SOCOM* can figure out how get the Broadband adaptor working not just once, but twice, why is it that the gigantic robotic super-brain currently thinking up *Resident Evil: Outbreak* in a Tokyo suburb somewhere can't do likewise? As every month passes, *PSW* becomes more convinced that our version of *Outbreak* will not be online. We get the feeling that we'll end up with a single-player game hastily scrambled together in a bid to keep us quiet while our cousins in America and Japan get to play with the toys that had our names on the tags. Here's hoping Capcom has the good sense to delay its release over here if need be. It'd break our hearts to have to gob in the face of *Resident Evil*. We'd do it though. So should it limp in here looking for handouts, gabbling nonsense about yesterday's glories, we'll kick it in the mouth and throw it down the fire escape.

FAME AND MISFORTUNE

Last month, this column warned that the PlayStation2, a console designed by men with nothing better to do, for men with nothing better to do, was at serious danger from a band of rebels identifying themselves only as 'Girls'. We can now report that this sweet-smelling militia group, answering to the rallying cry 'Notice that I've had my hair highlighted or I won't talk to you for the next 20 minutes', has secured a steady flow of femi-games. First it was all those crappy dancing games [actually, they were alright]. Then *Pop Idol* [actually, that was alright too]. Then some crappy karaoke games. And now this. *Fame A-freakin'-cademy*. *PSW* has no choice but to call bullshit on the whole concept of games being designed exclusively for girls. If horses started only offering rides to humans with ballbags, *Glamour* magazine would do the exactly the same thing. We're just protecting our turf.

BREAKING OUR SILENCE

PSW Says is proud to announce that it's the only opinion column in the entire world that thinks *Silent Hill: The Movie* is a really, really brilliant idea. No other game lends itself to the big-screen process quite like this one. Look at the evidence: no central characters, a collection of stories that only make sense in the head of a single Japanese man who hears voices and who keeps his socks in the freezer, and a brand name that won't mean anything to the general public. What more could you want? In fact, we hope it comes out on the same weekend as *Driver: The Movie* so we can watch them back-to-back. Because if shit films don't make the world go round, they certainly make the weekend go faster. *Fletch Lives*, fools.

AN
ANCIENT
CONSPIRACY,

A
BROKEN CODE,

AN
UNSOLVED
MURDER

THE
ULTIMATE
ADVENTURE

BROKEN SWORD

THE SLEEPING DRAGON



PlayStation 2



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GLOBAL EXTRA >>

ALL THE LATEST ON THE BIGGEST PLAYSTATION2 GAMES ON YOUR SHORT-RANGE RADAR.



MEDAL OF HONOUR: RISING SUN



THEY'RE COMING TO GET YOU BY LAND, SEA AND AIR. BETTER FIND A GUN.

> PUBLISHER	EA
> GENRE	SHOOTER
> OUT	DECEMBER
> ONLINE	YES

WARS ALWAYS BEGINS AT SEA IN MEDAL OF

Honour games. *Medal of Honour: Allied Assault* dumped you on the enemy-infested minefield of Omaha beach and *Medal of Honour: Rising Sun* begins on a sinking ship. Forget about the first level being easy, this is as realistic as war gets – unless you're about to sign up any time soon.

That ol' first-level feeling of dread gets even worse when it becomes clear that you don't have a weapon and dozens of enemy planes circle the only escape route. During the first minute below deck you'll see comrades meet their maker by way of drowning, electrocution or by simply being burned alive. And this

is before any enemies begin to attack. The opening scene beats *Medal of Honour: Allied Assault* hands down and, unless you're fully prepared for absolute carnage from the beginning, we'd suggest taking a deep breath and sitting in a darkened room for a few hours before you get a preview viewing of the exclusive footage on this month's DVD.

Later levels expose cities ravaged by tanks, bombs and yet more troublesome aircraft. We're not quite sure how the developers have managed to wedge several fighter planes into a screen already filled with tanks, soldiers and more explosions than a Iraqi shopping mall, but suffice to say, we're stunned. *Medal of Honour: Allied Assault* was one of the rare games to achieve a flawless 10/10 score, and from what we've seen so far *Medal of Honour: Rising Sun* could be awarded the same. Read the full review next issue and you'll find out for sure.





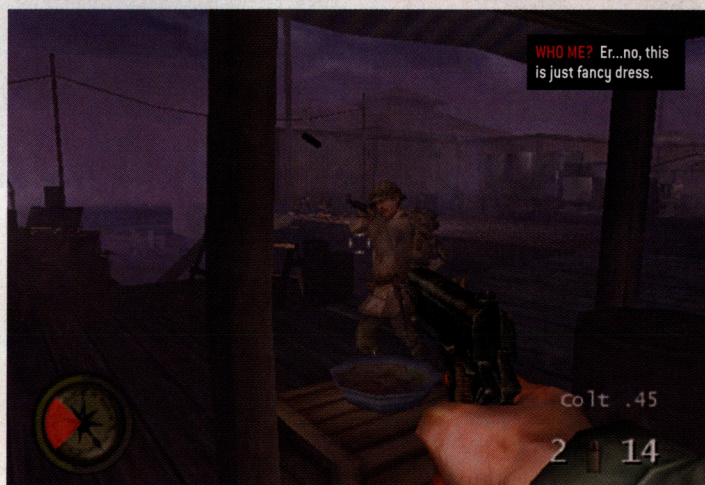
SHYEAH RIGHT Like that's gonna stop it....



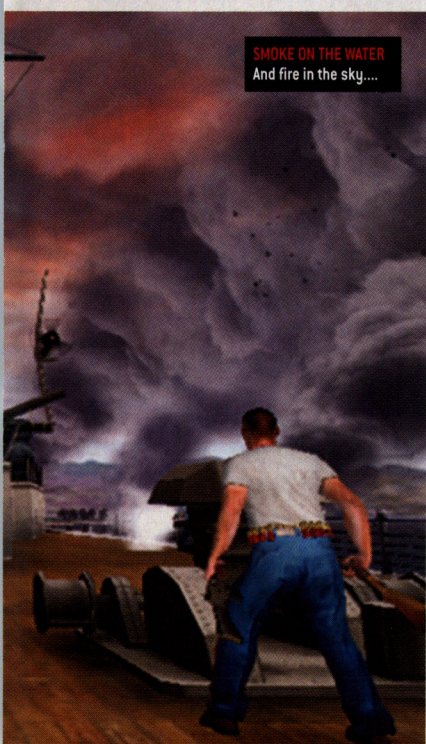
BIG GUNS Take the power back with these.



WATER MORTAR On a bridge. Over the Kwai.



WHO ME? Er...no, this is just fancy dress.



SMOKE ON THE WATER And fire in the sky....



CLOSE QUARTERS I'd shoot now. Now! Go!

STILLETTO SUPERSTAR



The 24-year-old Washington DC superbabe Mya originally hit the big time when she warbled on the Pras track *Ghetto Superstar* (*That Is What You Are*). Since then, she's had a successful album and has appeared in both *Chicago* and the dirty, knicker-flicking exploits of *Moulin Rouge*. We know you're typing these details into your internet browser as we speak...



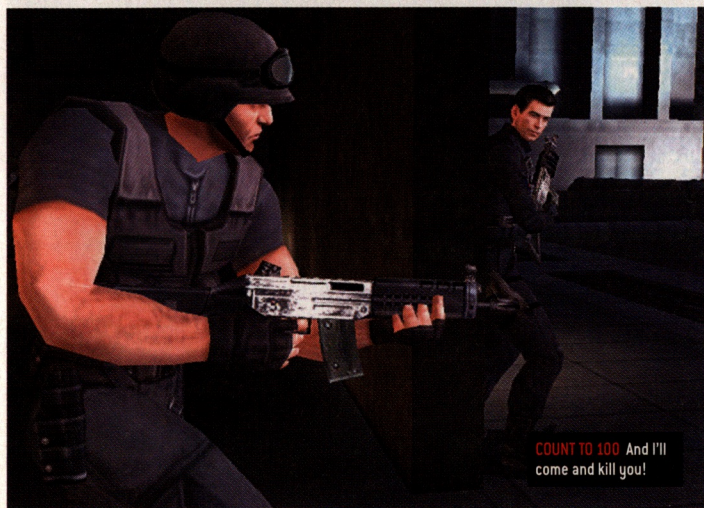
CLOSE LIKENESS Hey, they've even put in grey hairs. Wow.



ANGEL FACE Which one's Bond again?



BAD BOY Even the minions look sweet.



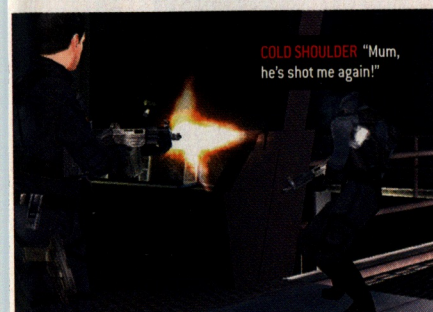
COUNT TO 100 And I'll come and kill you!



UNDER FIRE Is this Bond's death? As if.



HIS MAJESTY'S SERVICE 'Cos this is surely Prince Charles?



COLD SHOULDER "Mum, he's shot me again!"



BETTER DUCK Or get perforated by a minion.

JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

POP BABE REQUIRED TO SEX UP BOND FRANCHISE.
PLEASE SUPPLY PHOTO, DISCOGRAPHY AND SALARY DEMANDS.

> PUBLISHER
> GENRE
> OUT
> ONLINE

EA
ACTION
MARCH
NO

JAMES BOND HAS SEEN HIS FAIR SHARE OF LADIES IN THE past and, if you're perfectly honest with yourself, Bond babes are half the reason why you bother watching Bond films nowadays. Whether it's the droopy boobs of Teri Hatcher in the *The World is Not Enough* or the cracking thighs of Famke Janssen in *Goldeneye*, every Bond babe is designed to cause a pelvic sensation that prevents you from leaving your cinema seat between all the explosions.

Not satisfied with getting Brosnan to sign on the line and get

his ageing mug digitally reconstructed in *James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing*, developer EA has gone out and grabbed themselves a new Bond babe – who also sings the opening theme song. Enter the cute mistress of hip hop and R&B ballad princess Mya. You may have seen her in the Lady Marmalade video alongside dirtier girlfriends Christina Aguilera and Lil' Kim. In the game, Mya's character is called Mya Starling but it's not yet clear whether she is with James or against him. Although images of a virtual Pierce Brosnan getting it on with Mya immediately fill our heads with images of baldy bloater Fred Durst humping Britney Spears, PSW reluctantly assumes that Mya is a goodie. Originally due for release in late 2003, *Everything or Nothing* has now been delayed until March of next year. Tune in to PSW next month for a torrent of new info and DVD footage.

ON THE RUN From the cops, the mob...and rasta rhinos.



BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

THE BEST TALL FRENCH TALE SINCE *L'ES MISERABLES*. HELL, IT'S BETTER.

> PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

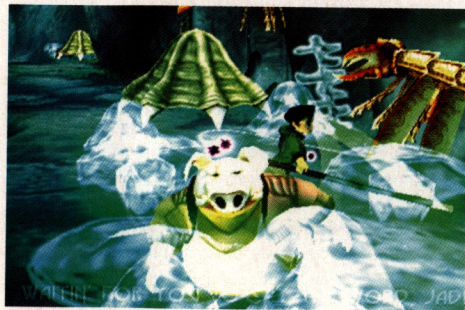
NOW THAT WE'VE SEEN BENEATH THE FRILLY SKIRT

of *Beyond Good & Evil*, we can tell you that it's looking very pretty up there. When we first heard about this Gallic action adventure title, we scratched our heads a bit. Alien invaders? Lady photojournalists? Small creatures that look like a cross between a dog, a goat and a turnip? A techno-handbag that speaks like an Italian hairdresser? But, like some crazed French recipe involving a barrel of snails and 12 garlic cloves, what sounded yukky has turned out to be delicious.

It's a third-person romp through a beautiful alien world

threatened by sinister forces both within and without. As top investigative reporter, Jade, you'll be uncovering unlikely conspiracies and battling those ever-present forces of evil, using a silky-smooth control method and some nifty combat moves. Loads of extra game types, including hovercraft racing and city exploring, fill out an already massive game world. Our favourite's the animal-snapping mode, where you photo every species for cash.

Oh, and *BG&E*'s so cinematic that everything's in widescreen. The most obvious comparison is Luc Besson's plumb crazy *Fifth Element* movie, but it's really in a world all its own. The maker of *Rayman* has spent absolutely years beaver over this one, and it's all coming together in style. We bet that talking pigs, rasta rhinos and oddball French humour won't appeal to everyone straight away, but it's a grower, we'll tell you now.



YOU LARDY BLOATER Peyj can pinch an inch or two — but he's a loyal bud.



CAN'T GET THE STAFF THESE DAYS Unless you're Jade, with her mystic stick.



CRAFT WORK Hovercraft fighting's fluid. Well, it's on fluid. Do you see?



SAY CHEESE. OR HAM Take a snap of every creature and you'll earn money.



IS SHE FRENCH OR WHAT? More style than 20 Uma Thurmans. In a box.



SONG AND DANCE Joff plays piano, you know. Is that him?



POP IDOL

PRETEND THAT YOU CAN SING, DANCE AND LOOK BEAUTIFUL WITHOUT ACTUALLY STANDING IN FRONT OF SIMON COWELL.

> PUBLISHER	CODEMASTERS
> GENRE	DANCE
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

STUFFED WITH 40 KARAOKE CLASSICS, POP IDOL IS SET TO BE the Christmas game that gets your whole family warbling in the lengthy hiatus between consuming an entire selection box and waiting for the turkey. That's right, folks – it's this year's mega-unit-shifting *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire*. Only good, hopefully.

Notable hits include ditties from Elvis, Britney, Robbie and, erm, Ricky Martin. Even if your nan can't quite grasp the revolutionary concept of a PS2 pad, at least she can watch the words and pretty pictures and sing along. If you plug in a dance mat and compete she'll become confused and you'll have to take her back to the home but, then again, that's always a bonus. Be warned, however, you'll have to be very good at the game to get a decent voice streaming out of the TV. Miss a few vital button combinations and your character will falter and begin to squeal like the fat one that left Atomic Kitten. Or you can use it as a posh karaoke machine instead, if you like, but without *Karaoke Stage* voice recognition.

The real questions are: will *Pop Idol* be Christmas number one?; can it possibly be better than the TV show?; and; can you get your old dad off of it once he's had a few too many glasses of mulled wine? Look out for the full, no-tunes-barred review next month. We're rehearsing *Baby One More Time* right now.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

IT SOUNDS LIKE A CUT-PRICE CARPET STORE, BUT IT'S ALL SET TO BE THE BIGGEST ACTION ADVENTURE OF 2004.

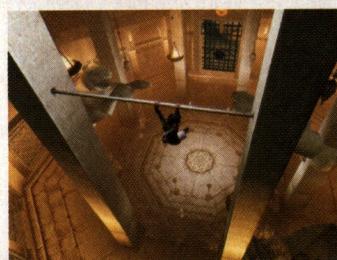
> PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
> GENRE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> OUT	MARCH
> ONLINE	NO

POOR LARA. AFTER STUMBLING ON TO PS2 with barely any applause, an obscure home computer game from 1989 gets updated and looks like achieving everything *Tomb Raider* promised to do but couldn't quite manage.

Firstly, the boy and girl tag team looks like it might actually work well, with each playable character assisting the other during key scenes. The Prince and pantalooned chick Farah double jump their way through sandmen, becoming older and

wiser throughout their quest. In reality, this means that you'll see a few scratches on each character, as well as a couple of wrinkles. The prince evolves from a limp wristed palace playboy to an athletic fighter and Farah, while becoming older, predictably falls in love with the prince. The Arabian setting and gorgeous visuals will instantly remind you of a Disney production such as the jaw dropping animation and detailed characters.

Filled with martial arts combat and more wall-walking acrobatics than *The Matrix*, *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* looks like being one of the most original games of 2004. Behind the scenes, Lara is looking on with a tear in her eye.



SENSE OF SCALE Rooms are enormous. We mean beeg.

ACTION SCENE Fights are cinematic. Yet not rubbish.



TEXT PSW! SEND KEYWORD "PSWEDITOR" TO 85100* AND START TXTING!

Write to us at: Dialogue, PSW, Computec Media, 55 Lowlands Road, Harrow-on-the-Hill, Middlesex HA1 3AW
or e-mail: psw@computecmedia.co.uk

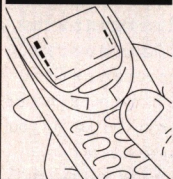
"AT NIGHT HE WATCHES PREVIEWS OF PORN UNDER HIS BIG BLANKET. I KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING UNDER THERE."

WIN! THE CHART TOP 5!

Letter of the month wins the top five games and a £50 voucher from game experts CEX. That's around £250 worth of free stuff! Christ, that's like winning the lottery syndicate in an extremely large office with, like, 100,000 employees. Or something.



TEXT PESTS



i don't do badgers. but since the "double bunny" incident i have managed 2 kill a squirrel & a pheasant.
Clench

fear my wrath. fear my wrath. fear my wrath. fear my wrath. fear my wrath.
Ashley Scrase

melville - at least stop everyone on the mag from taking the piss.
Matt Steel

i am wondering: is there a maturity gap between a man & his wife? i am 39. i don't get the same enthusiasm from the wife. am i unique?
Allen

it hurt knowing you said i was something i am the opposite to.
Leo Charnock

sorry, but how much do u get paid?
Jamie

who was the prat in the woolly hat holding the camera?
Matthew Austin

this text was brought 2 u by the letters U and R and the no. 80085.
Mikey B

WAR GAMES

I was thinking about the console wars the other day and came up with an interesting analogy: PlayStation2 = Britain. It may not look much, but the world couldn't live without it. Xbox = the US. Big and not bad, but not nearly as great as it thinks it is. Finally, GameCube = Iraq. Small and had it's moment in the spotlight, but everyone knew it would soon lose.

Sean Austin, via email

We like this a lot. More letters that make light of the fact that there's a very real chance that the world will end before we're old enough to experience the delights of allotments and grandchildren by comparing the current world situation to video games please. *JT*

HIT THE ROAD JAK

Too much wandering. Camera problems. Occasional Slowdown. These were the terms used when reviewing *Jak II: Renegade*. But hold your horses! Weren't these three of many flaws in *GTA Vice City*, the game that got 10/10 while *Jak II*, which is infinitely superior to *Jak* and *Daxter*, only got 8/10? Did you not pay attention to the fact you can nick vehicles to shorten your travel times and you can go on a hoverboard anywhere? You did the same thing with *Onimusha 2*, which deserved more than its predecessor. More consistency in the review staff please. Also, I don't like when you give Star Letters to people who say, "I like Jordan." What happened to rewarding inspired writing like mine? And why is it when people say "don't print this", you always do?
Ben Smallman, via email

We weren't going to use this letter. And then we got to the bit where you used the words "don't", "this" and "print" in the same sentence. After that, it had to go in. Why? Because we're like that. And you're wrong about *Jak II*. Why? Just because. *RM*

WE FEEL YOUR PAIN

It has come to our attention that you guys are suffering. The hell you guys must endure on a daily basis to provide us with PSW must be almost intolerable. The calorie loss must be intensely exhausting from sitting on your arses every day. Playing free games and ordering fast food, your

dialling fingers must have blisters the size of Mount Everest. And the brain cells you guys massacre by spending countless hours discussing how good a game is, I mean waw! Not to mention it must be an extreme brain teaser having to be forced to decide in your top 10 which is the best burger, cereal or porno. I mean porno for god's sake! It's PORNO! And I bet it takes a lot of effort to swallow your pride and accept those free gifts and goodies from companies. Finally to top it all, meeting celebrities. You guys got guts, mere mortals would tremble at the very idea. We just have one question for you freeloading, cookie cereal eating, game hogging, celebrity stoking bastards: where do we sign up?

Khaled Salloom and Mustafa Haidar, via email

You're right Khaled and Mustafa, it is incredibly demanding to work on PSW, but our bosses pay us incredibly well for our work so there's really no need to worry. When we get home after another gruelling day at the coalface, having spent eight or nine hours hammering away at Pro Evolution 3, at least we can console ourselves by stripping down to our briefs and rolling through mountains of money. Thanks for the concern though. *JT*

THE DAY THE LAUGHTER DIED

I was surprised at issue 47, basically because there was none of your master humour. After reading issue 46, I literally dreamed about the next issue. The article about the near-defeat you lot all suffered at the hands of a visitor had me splitting my sides, laughing uncontrollably until I passed out on my bed. After a good half-hour of unconsciousness, I awoke blurry eyed, questioning what had happened to me. I had one hell of a time. And then issue 47 hit me. Has the world gone mad? First I hear that the Olsen twins are not identical, then I find my brother's cheeks going blood-red at the mere mention of G-G-Gareth Gates' name and now my magazine is lacking humour. What's up guys? Was it the Rugby 2004 review?

GreenFlamedTorch, via email

Don't tell Lee that the Olsen twins aren't identical. That's just mean. Their 2000 release, *Our Lips Are Sealed*, remains at the very top of his "Ten Covertly Erotic Films I Can Watch With The Girlfriend" list. Next you'll be telling him that Liberace, his guiding light and spiritual guardian, used to sit on the whoopsy stick. Don't. Please don't. *RM*

THE GAME IS UP

As you may or may not know, Sky One has been advertising a new show called *Gameville* for a little while now.

Being an avid gamer, I decided to tune in. I decided to tune back off again within five minutes in complete and utter disgust. It was craptacular. The adverts say "a show for gamers, by gamers", yet the people who present it have little or no idea what they're talking about and have to look at their autocue at least once every five seconds. And don't get me started on that "Gamez Guru". What a complete and utter moron! Why can't anyone do anything right that involves video games and television? *Games Network* is shit, *Gamezville* is tripe and *GamesMaster* was OK, but still pretty bad. My point is that they should get people who actually know their Solid Snake from their Super Mario to present video game shows rather than use people who say "wicked" and "totally awesome" every ten or 15 seconds.

Tom, via email

If you ask us, they should bring back the late-night Channel 4 show Bits. OK, so that was a bit rubbish too, but at least it had Emily Booth. Watching her utter the words "first-person shooter" was enough to give our underbits rainbow sensations. Ooow. [For more on that, point your PC in the direction of www.bouff.tv and prepare to loosen that belt]. *JB*



THE GAME IS UP Bring her back. Go on. Please. Please?

07:53. 7th December 1941.

**In two minutes time,
paradise will be lost forever.**

New mission coming soon.



PlayStation®2



MEDAL OF HONOR RISING SUN

You Don't Play, You Volunteer.™



Challenge Everything

mohea.co.uk

[illegible]

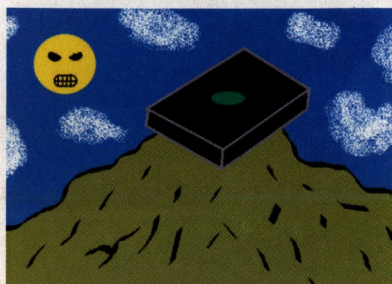


FIGURE 1 An Xbox blocks out the sun, making it angry.

WILLIAM TOLD

And so it was that the richest and most evil man on the planet, the demon William of Gates, had devised a hellish scheme. "I shall construct a device," he said, "so large that it will block the beaming rays of the eternal sun (see fig 1) and I shall call it the large box... or Xbox. I haven't decided yet." The sun became infuriated and cast a heatwave over Europe. But hark, a resistance began to form, and black monoliths did descend on mountain high where William had plonked his monstrosity (see fig 2). And by sheer gaming brilliance overthrew the rich bastard's plans. For those monoliths were mighty PS2s. They then celebrated their victory swaying from side to side to the lyrical stylings of The Pixies singing *River Euphrates*. Camera zooms out/fade to black/roll credits. (As for the GameCubians of Nintendodia, they could not come as it was their naptime).

Seán Wrenn, via email.

A tiny work of genius. PSW salutes. LN

TOP 12 THINGS A GOOD BOYFRIEND DOES

- 1) Holds your hand whenever he possibly can.
- 2) Puts his arms around your waist and whispers in your ear, "I love you."
- 3) Kisses you every chance he gets.



FIGURE 2 A small army of black plastic monoliths descend.

- 4) Holds you close when you're cold.
- 5) Holds you close and then kisses you.
- 6) Kisses you on the tip of your nose.
- 7) When you're in the movies together, he puts his arm around you and then you rest your head on his shoulder and then he tilts your chin and he kiss you very lightly. Ahh!
- 8) Massages your neck when it hurts.
- 9) When people diss you, he stands up for you.
- 10) Looks at you and tells you that he loves you.
- 11) Puts your head on his chest so you can listen to the steady beat of his heart.
- 12) Always opens all doors for you.

Jamie Stocker, via email

Top 5 things a real boyfriend does:

- 1) Puts his hands wherever he possibly can.
- 2) Puts his tongue in your ear and belches, "Chuck us the Hobnobs."
- 3) Looks up your skirt every chance he gets.
- 4) Holds you close when you're cold, and then rubs your arse with extreme vigour.
- 5) When you are alone, he makes a series of deeply improper and obscene suggestions, refusing to take no for an answer until you tell him that your that your short-tempered father is always back from the working men's club in time to catch The Krypton Factor on Challenge TV, which starts in five minutes. JB

MANIA

THEY JUST PLAYED *STAY BEAUTIFUL* ON EASTENDERS! I just did the JUMP, POINT, SCREAM AND BOUNCE thing that I always do when the Manics get played on TV, all my family are really confused – lol. This is Bhav's email address, iznt it? Cause I don't actually no if it is, I'm just guessing. If u r NOT Bhav, then I hope u really enjoyed an insight into my life. U have learnt that I am a fan of the Manic Street Preachers 2 day. I wonder what u will learn 2morrow? If u r Bhav, then u didnt learn anyfink cause u already knew, so there!

Mikey B, via email

Richie Manic must been kicking himself. If only he'd given it a couple more years. LN

YOUR TEN-MINUTE FREEVIEW HAS EXPIRED

I have a major problem concerning my gaming time. You see, I have two TVs in my house. My PS2 is connected to the main one and the other TV is so small its not even worth mentioning. I used to get loads of opportunities to game until my stupid older brother moved back into my house. Now I never get a chance to play anymore. During the day he watches crap like *The Bill* and at night he watches previews of porn in the dark under a big blanket (you know well what he's doing). I hate him and I never, ever get a chance to game. Has this happened to any of the PSW team? If so please help me out before I kill someone.

Piarras Ó Murchú, via email

Of more of a worry to us right now is that you're physically present to witness your brother and his grotty adventures with his big blanket. Maybe if you'd let him maul his meat in private, he'd be more willing to miss The Bill. Have a word with him. Failing that, tell your parents that he's turning your front room into an orgasm arcade and wait for them to turf him out. JT

LETTER OF THE MONTH BULLY FOR YOU

Did I miss your review of *Alien VS Predator* or did they sneak this one out or fear of a bad review? I buy your magazine every month, by the way, the reviews are the most well balanced I've found. Missing a decent sci-fi strategy game for my PS2, I had a look at this in the shop and, for some reason, I was talked into buying it by one of my local games store till monkeys. (I used to teach him Art at school, which doesn't make his opinion the most reliable.) It's not bad but not very deep. I'd say stick to playing the slightly rosey PSone *Command and Conquer* until this turns up in the bargain bins in a few months. Hope you get a review copy and don't end up buying it full price too. And by the way, keep taking the piss out of the Xbox guys, I think the idea of Bill Gates controlling the games market would ruin games. He's already bugged up the rest of the computing industry. My year 10 IT class get me talking (all lesson) about it to make me forget what I'm teaching. In the process, they also got the only lad in the class that owned an Xbox to sell his in disgust through persistent bullying. Good lads. There's hope yet.

Simon Beech, via email

This letter truly warmed the frozen ventricles of our shivering hearts. To hear that the future is in safe hands, that the next-generation of gamers is being taught at a very young age to treat all Xbox owners with the utmost disrespect, filled us with joy. So have some free games Mr Beech. RM



PSW TEAM MAIL ORDER BRIDES >>



>>LEE NUTTER

Lee wasn't here so we picked one out for him. We're sure they'll be very happy together.



>>RICHARD MELVILLE

Melville buys his brides young, trains them up and then sell them on at a massive profit.



>>JON BROWN

Craving a little danger in his life, Brownie picked a broad currently serving life for manslaughter. Ah.



>>JON TODD

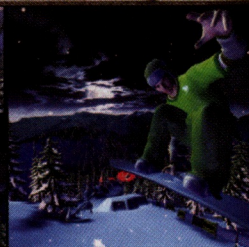
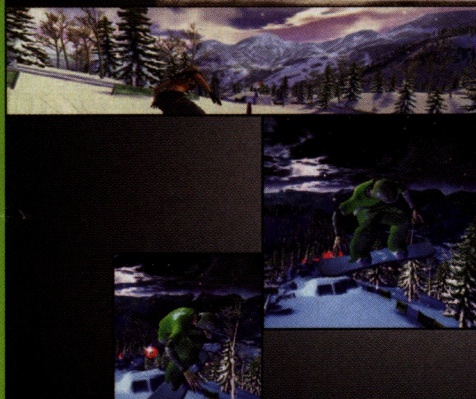
Welcome to PSW Mr Todd. Help yourself to a skinny Russian bride. Put your wallet away. It's on us.



>>JOFF BROWN

Mr Brown only had one criteria: brute physical strength. Hence Helga. She can bench 160.

Throw a stylish backside 5,
impress the press, stoke your sponsor and
diss your mate who's 100 miles away.



Microsoft
game studios



Don't call it a sequel. Amped2 is here to declare itself the best freestyle experience on land, sea or air. Shred with friends from across the planet on the Xbox Live™ service and run your mouth as you go on endless runs. Compete with friends or take on some claimer through XSN Sports and get paid in praise. Over 300 indie tunes will play as you reap rewards for pulling tricks like stalls and butter with smooth style. It's your chance to ride with pros and try the new mountain sport, snowskate. The slopes are yours. How they're ripped-up is up to you.

amped2



it's good to play together

xbox.com/amped2

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TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM

ONE DEAD DICTATOR. ONE DEADLY TASK FORCE. ONE SHOT, ONE KILL. THIS IS THE MOST REAL, THE MOST THRILLING *GHOST RECON* YET, AND IT'S ALREADY NEARLY HERE. SO, IF YOU GO INTO THE WOODS TODAY, BE SURE OF A VERY BIG SURPRISE....



> TYPE	TACTICAL SHOOTING
> PUBLISHER	RED STORM
> DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	YES

WE'VE NEVER BEEN TO CUBA, BUT WE IMAGINED IT WAS FULL OF

a) Volkswagen Beetles, b) cigar-smoking prostitutes and c) bananas. Possibly all three together in some kind of hedonistic Marxist fruit-and-car orgy. Turns out we were wrong: it's full of men who want to kill us. At least in 2009, it will be. We're not prophets, though – we only know this because it's what *Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm* is all about. When Castro dies five years hence (says *Jungle Storm*), the country will be plunged into a tragic/exciting civil war and it'll be up to the rest of the world to sort things out. We're no experts, but we've learned to trust video games about this sort of thing. So we're ready to don a natty green-and-brown camo suit and crawl up the tropical beaches to take out the filthy totalitarian enemy. Nice one, *Jungle Storm*; we'll consider it training for the near future.

As the title delicately hints, *Jungle Storm* is from the *Ghost Recon* stable. On PC, it's just about knocked out all comers in the battle for top

squad-based title. On PS2, it's been a much harder fight. Basically because the first PS2 *Ghost Recon* game was stinky. Think enemy intelligence that made *Forrest Gump* look like Hannibal Lecter. Graphics that looked like they were turned out by a Speak and Spell. And a general greyness and shoddiness to the whole thing that made us associate the *Ghost Recon* franchise with bad things like dying bunnies and nude Pat Butchers. So *Jungle Storm* has a lot to set right – but it's trying really, really hard.

Here's how it works. You are one of two small teams charged with eliminating dug-in enemy soldiers from an area. As well as ordering everyone about, you can take direct control of any character. You can even issue voice commands to them via a USB headset – everything from ordering them to hold back from a dangerous situation, to taking out a specific enemy. And in case you were worried about Grey Corridor Syndrome, check out the screenshots: it mostly takes place in the great outdoors of Cuba and Colombia. Think it was hard spotting an enemy in >



WET AND WILD Well, wet and highly trained.



FIRE FIGHT Two vs one — good odds. Shoot!



ARCH ENEMY Cities mean stealth action.



a single room? Wait until they've got an entire jungle island to hide in.

I'LL HAVE A MOJITO PLEASE, LOVE

Just like in real life — just like, we tell you — there're many ways to get the job done in *Jungle Storm*. You can, of course, arrive on the shores of Cuba and run with all your men to the nearest enemy encampment, then try and shoot them down. You know, like in all the other games you play. What will happen is this: on the way to the camp, half your men will be shot down almost instantly by unseen snipers lurking in the undergrowth. Then you'll reach the camp in full view of the enemy and watch the rest of your boys get cut up by a hail of bullets, as the guards take full advantage of their cover to put a whole bucketful of caps in yo' ass. You'll lie there, bleeding to death on the Caribbean sands, as some punk two-bit hired mercenary comes over and unloads a barrel in your face. You [the video game character] will die an unmourned death on an island far from home. You [the player] will go "shit". This plainly isn't the way to go.

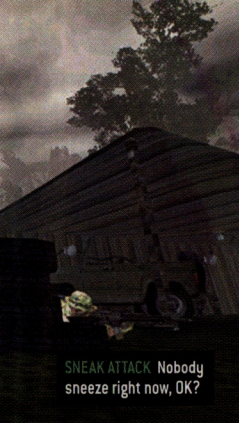
But there is a better way. Instead of charging over to the mercs as if they were giving out free Kit Kat Chunkies, you send your beta squad the long way round, through the fetid swamp and up onto the surrounding ridge with orders to take down anyone they see. Meanwhile, you get on your belly, tool up with a sniper rifle of your own and begin the achingly tense journey through the forest. With your posh binoculars you scan the trees for signs of action. Spotting a solitary sniper, you get him in your sights and swiftly, silently blow his brains out. When you finally reach camp, you sit and wait invisibly in the shade of the swaying ferns, until a single soldier is visible. Shoot him and all

hell breaks loose, but just as you think they're about to spot you and take you down, beta team show up on the other side of the base and help you hammer them into the ground. It's the classic pincer movement, beloved of Napoleon and crabs. And it's just secured you your first victory in the war against whatever comes after communism. Longer than the direct route? Yes. More complex? Certainly. More fun? Believe it. The point we're trying to make is that this isn't some kind of easy-going, milk-and-water, half-assed arcade title. This is the real thing. This is what happens when you try to shoot people — they shoot back. We'd go so far as to say: this is hardcore.

To prove it, one head shot means death to you or the enemy. Get shot up, and you won't just see a small energy bar decrease. You'll be physically decimated, unable to walk at proper speed and much more vulnerable to enemy fire (if you find yourself limping through the second half of a mission, don't be surprised). You also have to keep an eye on your injured comrades. There's no point making it back to the extraction area if you have to wait half an hour for Billy No-Feet to come crawling back with you. The ruthless ones among you will be glad to know that the missions won't end if you sustain casualties, so even when a man's down you'll be able to complete it. That man just won't be available for later missions. And because you train up your troops over a series of runs, that's going to hurt your operational ability. See, we're already talking like vets (the Vietnam Kind, not the *Animal Hospital* kind. Obviously.)

THEM'S THE RULES, KID

The sense of heady realism extends to what you can and can't do. There



"THIS ISN'T SOME KIND OF EASY-GOING, MILK-AND-WATER, HALF-ASSED ARCADE TITLE. THIS IS THE REAL THING... WE'D GO SO FAR AS TO SAY: THIS IS HARDCORE."

are rules of engagement here, people! For a start, you can't just go around stealing the enemy's weapons, even when they're dead and can't complain: you stick with what you're issued, soldier. Harm a hostage and you're right off limits. Shooting the enemy in the back is discouraged, and don't play around with corpses, arranging them into lifelike tableaux of famous battle scenes (that last one was just a general life-lesson, actually).

If you storm in and start spraying bullets around, you're much more likely to hurt the hostages, but also to make the captors give up the whole thing and shoot the hostages while they can. They have to do that, see, or nobody will ever take their spiel about "killing every m****f****ing last one" seriously again. It means that it's imperative not to alert other bad guys, or you'll most likely end up dead. It's a reminder that, just like in the real world, the moment you pick up a gun you've given everyone in the world >



WEAPONS OF MASS ENTERTAINMENT

WE INTERROGATE PRODUCER VINCENT GRECO AND ASSOCIATE PRODUCER SOPHIE PENDARIÈS FOR EXCLUSIVE *JUNGLE STORM* INTEL.

[PSW] *Jungle Storm's* set in 2009. Is realism important to *Jungle Storm*, or will there be a ton of futuristic weapons?

[Sophie Pendariès] Realism is very important to *Jungle Storm*. It's one of the values of the *Ghost Recon* brand, and the storyline, the environments, the situations and all the weapons are realistic.

[Vincent Greco] The life cycle of weapons is very long [just think about how old the weapons currently used are, and you will understand that they do not change every five years]. So definitely, the game is realistic. The only futuristic device you will find is the threat indicator that will warn you if there is a danger.

[PSW] PC gamers tend to look down on console gamers as being, well, a bit thick. How have you altered *Ghost Recon* to make it more console-friendly?

[VG] We worked a lot on the menu and on the interface. In Recruit mode you also have the auto-aim feature. The controls have been tuned very carefully, so after playing a while, you will be able to aim much more accurately without any help.

[PSW] What measures have you taken to stop getting lost in the crush of upcoming online squad-based titles like *SOCOM 2* and *Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow*?

[VG] *SOCOM* and *Ghost Recon* are quite different. On *Ghost Recon* you can embody any of the six members of your team. This means that when there is something challenging to do, the player (and not the AI) can do it. Moreover if you lose one man in a mission – and with the one-shot-one-kill feature you have to be very careful – you will not find him available for the next one: he is definitively lost. In *SOCOM* you play always the same guy in always the same team, from mission to mission, even if a team-member gets killed (he can take half a dozen of bullets before being killed). *Ghost Recon* is more realistic and, therefore, there is more tension.

[PSW] What new gameplay additions can we expect from a jungle environment? How will camouflage affect the missions?

[SP] As far as camouflage is concerned, we added a visibility icon in the interface: its transparency will depend on how visible the soldiers are. This new indicator will bring the tactical gameplay a step further by increasing the stealth part.

[VG] Of course, each tree is a potential place to hide, and there are a lot of cover points in a jungle environment. You also have to be very careful with your sniper – his camouflage suit is so similar to his environment, even the player can spend some seconds to actually notice him while he follows the team!

[PSW] Do you have any plans to include dangerous wildlife à la *Metal Gear Solid 3*, and if so, how will it affect the gameplay?

[VG] The Ghosts are professionals (they do not eat snakes). So there are no animals as potential targets: this is not *Ghost Recon*. Of course, we could have added animals to have "false alerts" (you think there is an enemy but in fact, it's an animal), or to give an indication where the enemies are (for example, you could see birds flying away from a tree if there is someone in proximity). Perhaps next time.

[PSW] What did you feel were the problems with the last PS2 *Ghost Recon* game, and how will you rectify them in *Jungle Storm*?

[SP] The main criticisms on the first *Ghost Recon* game on PS2 were the graphic quality and the badly balanced difficulty.

[VG] So we have worked a lot on modelisations, textures and lighting. I think the player will notice that when playing the game. Concerning the difficulty, we have done a lot of playtests to tune it, and it is now more progressive.

[PSW] Tell us something about the Multiplayer modes. Are there any totally new ideas that you bring to the online squad gaming table?

[SP] We have one new Multiplayer mode called Mouse Hunt. Which brings the total number of modes to 12: three solo modes, four co-op modes and five team modes.

[PSW] What sort of outdoor research did you do to ensure that you could accurately recreate a jungle environment? Were there many trips to Cuba and Colombia?

[SP] Unfortunately, there were no trips to Cuba nor Colombia....

[VG] But I will suggest your idea to my boss. Who knows, perhaps next time it will be Hawaii....



LOON PLATOON They must be mad to join.



DRESSED TO KILL Dig those camo pants.

"THE ODD LEAF FALLS SLOWLY TO THE GROUND, IN A LEISURELY, I-DON'T-GIVE-A-SHIT-ABOUT-YOUR-CONFLICT-BECAUSE-I'M-JUST-A-LEAF KIND OF WAY."

a legitimate license to shoot you in self-defense. Embarrassingly, when we played, we ended up getting shot up and limping around with our last available soldier, trying to guide the hostages out of the cave complex and back to the extraction point at approximately half a mile an hour.

The one way in which *Jungle Storm* isn't impressing us so much right now is in the looks department. Well, in most ways at least. There's nothing here to compare with the likes of *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun*, but there's a good reason for that. Instead of being a "glass corridor" one-way trip through a set route surrounded by pretty foliage, *Jungle Storm* allows you to track your prey all over massive islands that can take tens of minutes to cross. So it's not surprising if everything looks a little less special. We're not complaining, because it allows for slicker online play. And that, say the marketing men of 2003, is where the kids are at these

days. Mind you, some of what's here is looking nice, and it's all set to improve. Trees sway in the wind. Birds flit around overhead. The odd leaf falls slowly to the ground, in a leisurely, I-don't-give-a-shit-about-your-conflict-because-I'm-just-a-leaf kind of way. It's great for camouflage, and we confidently expect the character models to improve too. By the way, if you're sceptical about the ability to hide in the undergrowth, don't be. The way it works is disarmingly simple: a small eye icon in one corner of the screen will dim or brighten according to how well you're hidden. Easy, eh?

PUTTING YOUR LIFE ON THE LINE

Like so many of the latest squad-based titles, you aren't going to get the most out of *Jungle Storm* if you just sit there playing on your own. No, you need to stick your broadband adapter in the back of your black box and get

GIVE THAT GAME A FINE CUBAN CIGAR!

IF YOU THOUGHT WE'D COVERED ALL *GHOST RECON'S* FEATURES, HOW ABOUT...



It's not all about the rumble in the jungle: you'll also get the chance to explore some strangely deserted, dangerous city areas in Cuba and Colombia too.

POTENTIAL:

Squad fighting and cities go together like rum and pineapple juice.



Don't expect all your enemies to sit still doing their best lemon impression: cars, tanks and planes mean the fighting forces of darkness will take the battle to you.

POTENTIAL:

Since we can't drive 'em, vehicles will cause mucho trouble for soldiers.



As well as scoping out the big cities, you'll have to clear out caves that house swarms of pro-evil radicals. Just don't get claustrophobic back there, OK?

POTENTIAL:

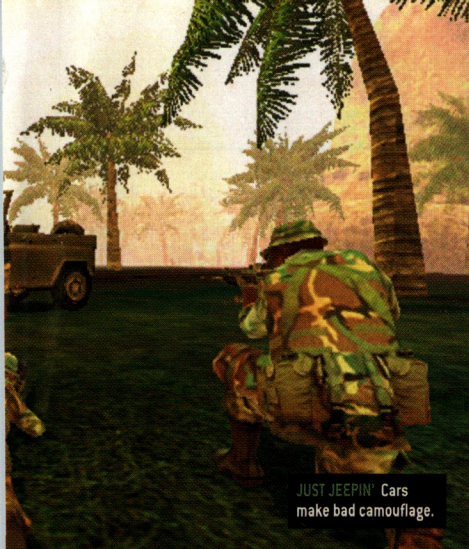
Caves make perfect enemy bases to infiltrate, so we're happy.



If hiding in undergrowth starts getting dull, then why not simply take on night missions and cloak yourself in darkness? The enemy won't have a clue!

POTENTIAL:

As long as there're shadows to skulk in, we'll be there.



JUST JEEPIN' Cars make bad camouflage.



THE TOM CLANCY PLOT GENERATOR

THIS IS HOW *GHOST RECON* CREATOR TOM CLANCY GETS HIS STORIES. TRY IT NOW.

In... a) Post-war Iraq ☐
b) Post-Communist Russia ☐
c) Postmodern Japan ☐

a... a) Tinpot Ukrainian dictator ☐
b) Twisted Asian Business tycoon ☐
c) Mad Colombian drugs baron ☐

gets his hands on... a) Lethal nanotechnology! ☐
b) An incurable man-made virus! ☐
c) A deadly orbital satellite! ☐

Now, the... a) CIA's top female assassin ☐
b) Vietnam vet on one last job ☐
c) President of the God Damn US of A ☐

...is the only person who can stop the destruction of the entire United States – so it, the entire world! What they don't know is...

a) There's a mole in the White House! ☐
b) They've stolen our stealth planes! ☐
c) The monkey has the damn virus! ☐
Clear the area! CLEAR THE AREA! ☐



OVER A BARREL Get away from the oil! Duh.



FLY BLIND Sabotage the plane and get out!



OOH, CHASE ME Troops will follow or wait.



FIRE AT WILL Don't waste ammo out here.

inter-gaming with all your cyberfriends... or something. Alright, we do know that the vast majority of you have about as much interest in going online with PS2 as you have of microwaving your own genitals, but this just might change your mind. You'll control one individual member of a team, with different players being allocated the post of leader. That's right – you'll get to order around people you've never met. And never will, unless they don't mind you calling them a "spineless toad-son of a whore who couldn't shoot his own whore mother with a mother-shooting kit from two feet away". Actually, the folks who play Xbox Live play their *Ghost Recon* game more than any other single title. And we trust them. Even if we sometimes do call them tubby bitches. Well, they are, aren't they?

Talking of inter-console prejudice: if PC owners start striding up to you in the street [bios arranged neatly in their top pocket and glasses held together with tape] and call you a wanker for not being able to play the PC's *Ghost Recon: Island Thunder* game, you can smile, pull their shoes off and chuck said shoes down a well, safe in the knowledge that you actually can. You see, as a final bonus,

every single *Island Thunder* campaign is contained within the *Jungle Storm* game in its own little hermetically sealed section. In other words, you're getting two games for the price of one. And you don't have to fumble with a beige box and squint over a monitor to play it, either. So it's all good. Anyone who wants to know what the brutal thrill of real battle is like should... well, they should join the army, obviously. The rest of us who want some in-depth strategic combat are well advised to hang around and praise Lordy Jesus all together, now. For the people behind *Ghost Recon* are giving you pearls.

FIRST OPINIONS

Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm has the potential to deliver the most accurate, tense and thrilling squad experience yet. We've still got some quibbles about its looks – which should be sorted out before we review it – and it's all quite intensely PC-ish, but the chances are we'll be giving this one top marks for stealth, realism and military muscle. Stay tuned for more on this very soon.

/JOFF BROWN



STAKE OUT Can you spot the two camo'd soldiers here? Right at the front.



VALLEY NICE INDEED Look for all available cover, and watch for snipers.



BEACH NUT It may look pretty out there, but watch out for evildoers.



> KANG BANG

Nick Kang's looking for a fight. He's got 240 square miles of LA to search. He'll find one.

"THE CITY OF DREAMS –
GANGSTA, HOLLYWOOD,
GLITZ-AND-TITS LA"

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

YOU LIKED *GTA: VICE CITY*? THEN GET READY FOR THE CITY OF ANGELS.
BECAUSE *TRUE CRIME* IS NOTHING LESS THAN THE NEXT STEP....

> GENRE	ACTION
> DEVELOPER	LUXOFLEX
> PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

AT THE MOMENT, WE'RE JUST STANDING ON

a street corner, watching life go by. A couple of hoodlums go past, walking tall and talking street. It's all very quiet here in central LA. A few cars pass, trees wave in the smoggy breeze. Then a call comes through on our cop radio. "There's a turf war between high-class hookers taking place on Beverly Boulevard. Active units respond." We dash out into the street in front of a car, forcing it to screech to a stop mere inches away. Jumping in and chucking out the driver, we speed through the traffic on the block. Up ahead, two bikini-clad, Uzi-toting girl gangs are swapping bullets on either side of the road. We aim our car straight at one, but they roll out of the way and run off. Jumping out of the car, we give chase on foot. One of the gun-loving hookers grabs a passer by as a human shield and starts shooting. We aim a single shot at her head with pinpoint accuracy and she falls down, instantly dead. That's justice, LA style. And it's a slice of action taken directly from *True Crime: Streets of LA*. Did we get you interested yet, or are you clinically dead?

True Crime blends story, missions and free-roaming action in a way never before seen. OK, in a way seen not so long ago in a couple of cities known as Liberty and Vice, but we'll get to that later. You play Nick Kang, a Chinese-american crazy cop. The Russian Mafia and the Triads are on a two-gang crimewave. Sorting it out will take an economy-sized helping of explosions. It doesn't matter how much damage you do, as long as you bring down the perps. By the end of even the smallest encounter, the whole area will be strewn with wreckage. Take it from us: it makes *Bad Boys 2* look like *The Lizzy MacGuire Movie*.

HE WAS PACKING HEAT BOSS, I SWEAR

So... are we reminded of any other big-name action franchises? Ones with the words 'Auto', 'Theft' and 'Grand' in? The answer, inevitably, is yes. *True Crime* does the *GTA* thing, and not in just a few ways either. The whole concept of the game, certainly the drive-and-shoot parts, is pretty much the same. This doesn't mean that *True Crime* isn't its own game, however. There's a ton of real differences, like the lengthier amount of time spent on interior missions and the emphasis on martial arts. Perhaps the biggest difference is that you're a cop here, and even in tinseltown, indiscriminate killing isn't allowed. Kill an innocent, and your karma goes down a point. Take out a crim without killing them and you'll get a point back. And solving crimes by chasing down perps seems to be as much fun as causing them.

If you kill indiscriminately then civil disorder rises. Eventually, of course, the cops will come after you too, but you can get away with a surprising amount of death before they do. Act all nasty and you'll go down your own branching storyline. Be good cop, and you'll... OK, we don't know what happens if you play nice, because we spent all our time roughing up perps on the street, causing immense, epic-sized pile-ups for absolutely no reason, picking fights with dangerous gangstas, and trying – in time-honoured fashion – to test the limits of the game by driving into ridiculous situations that caused civilians to die as if it was going out of fashion fast. We don't mind, because it meant we had to "infiltrate" a strip club and go, ahem, head-to-head with the evil stripper criminals there. Who said vice isn't its own reward?



GRAND THEFT AIKIDO?

THERE MAY BE SOME SIMILARITIES TO ROCKSTAR'S CRIME SERIES, BUT *TRUE CRIME*'S SO MUCH MORE. LOOK....



> GOOD COP, BAD COP

Be nasty and you'll influence the entire course of the story. Be nice, and you might have a chance to get it on with your glamorous lady partner. Sex or violence, sir?



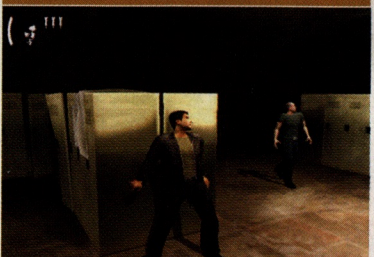
> MARTIAL ARTS

Combat in *True Crime* is complex, involving and fast. Learn new moves off your dojo-owning brother and you'll be pulling off Jet Li-style moves in no time.



> STREET CRIME

Every minute or so, a new "incident" erupts on the streets around you. Could be domestic violence, a knife fight, a mugging or a full-on gang war. Solve them for extra cop points.



> INDOOR ACTION

True Crime's inside environments are incredibly detailed and realistic... and almost completely smashable. Expect gunfights in saunas, nightclub rumbles and more.

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA FACT

> STREETS OF CRAZE

The maddest street crime yet? A barny between two chefs armed with meat cleavers. They call it la-la land....

> WHAT'S MY MOTIVATION?

Nick's cop father died in tragic circumstances. We smell a back-story and revenge plot coming up.

> SEXPLOITATION FLICK

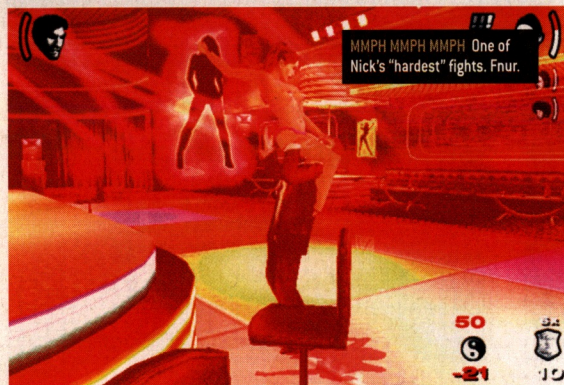
As you can see from the shots, *TC* is one of the raunchiest, rudest games we've seen for quite a while. Goody.

> SLLOOOWW MMMOTIIIONNN

For kick-ass moves and split-second shooting sequences, time stretches out. Yes, it's Bullet Time. So?



“240 SQUARE MILES OF CITY FILLED WITH DEAD-BEAT, LOW-LIFE SCUM. JUST LIKE YOU.”



WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

“TAKE PART IN EXPLOSIVE GUN BATTLES WITH DOUBLE-FISTED FIREPOWER, DEVASTATING MARTIAL ARTS BRAWLS, AND HIGH-SPEED SHOOTOUTS ACROSS 240 SQUARE MILES OF ACCURATELY RECREATED L.A.”

CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE

True Crime looks the business. Every pedestrian is highly detailed. Cars doesn't just buckle when they're hit – paint cracks, windscreens splinter into safety glass, bonnets wrinkle as if you'd just driven into a gigantic pile-up. Which, this being *True Crime*, you probably have. As for the city itself, it breathes L.A. Not the real L.A., you understand, the grimy place approximately 5,500 miles away. No, we mean the city of your dreams – gangsta, Hollywood, Glitz-and-Tits Los Angeles. You know this place because you've seen the movies. *Lethal Weapon*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Face/Off*, *Heat*.... You've seen the gunfights, you've watched the car chases. Well, *True Crime* is pretty much just like that. The streets may be mapped down to the last piece of gum on the sidewalk, but we don't think there's quite as much crazy crime in the real L.A. If there is, then we'd like to change our California holiday to somewhere quieter, like Afghanistan.

There're 240 square miles of city, from the beaches to the Hollywood hills. You'll recognise the endless, somehow ominously nondescript suburban condos. The Oakland sprawl. Venice Beach of *Baywatch* fame. The scummy chic of Sunset Boulevard. It's all laid out here for you to explore, and it's filled with deadbeat, low-life scum. A bit like you, really. Because Nick Kang a) is a loose cannon, b) was suspended for "doing things his way" and has only just got back on the force, c) has a love/hate relationship with his beautiful female partner, and d) *he's a cop on the edge, dammit!* All of which gives you some tiny excuse for the immense amount of carnage you cause on L.A.'s roads, sidewalks and nightclubs. That's right, the action frequently spills in from the street into indoor locations like warehouses, shooting ranges, strip clubs and gyms. There's a pause for loading, so don't expect instant gratification, but you won't mind once you see the lustre on each and every interior. These locations form the perfect place for Nick Kang to pull off his impressive kung fu moves. Kang relies on his Jeet Kune Do-alike style to take down perps, and he can learn new moves in his brother's sparring workouts. It brings Kang up to true action-hero status.

STARS IN YOUR EARS

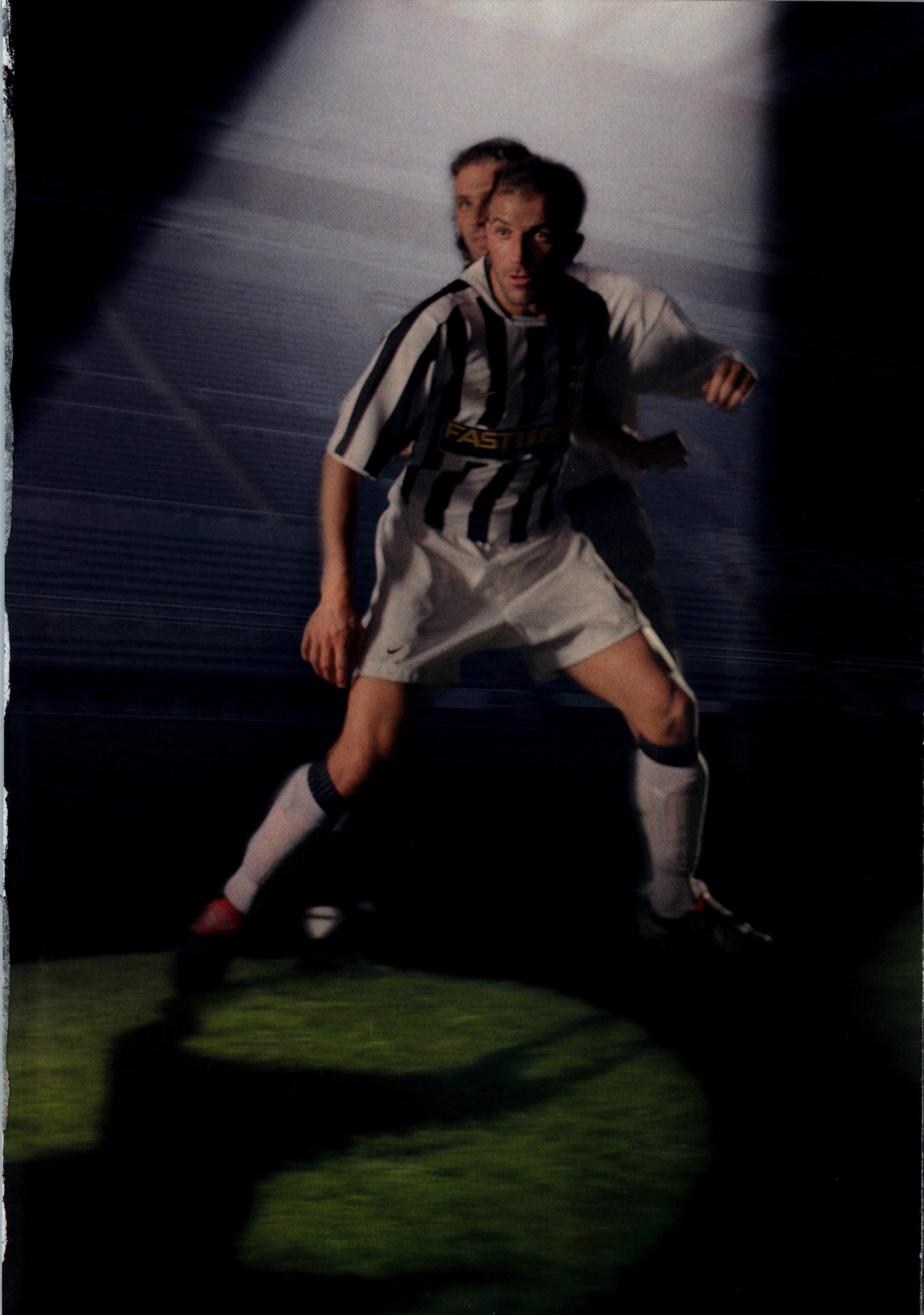
As if to show just how much money the makers of *True Crime* had to throw around, they've only gone and kitted it out with a host – yes, a full host – of celebrity voices. Corpse-faced hard man Gary Oldman plays both a CIA operative and a mafia boss, and *Reservoir Dogs* torture junkie Michael "Mr White" Madsen is a dodgy cop. Christopher Walken, the man who has never yet played a character without the taint of howling insanity, is cast here as the amiable old-timer who overlooks Nick's progress in the force. Mind you, with the King of Kook doing the voiceover, we wouldn't be surprised if he goes la-la crazy psycho halfway through the game.

In short, *True Crime* has had just about everything going for it: martial arts, guns, cars, exploration, story... it's all here, wrapped up in as pretty a package as you could ask for. But can all these parts stick together to form a top game, or is *True Crime* going to end up a true mess? The review's here next month.

FIRST OPINIONS

We think *True Crime*'s probably going to be awesome. Find out next month just how great it is. We'll even play good cop to see what happens. If we really, really have to....

/ JOFF BROWN





Spotlight Off The Ball™ Vision. Now your reading of the game makes all the difference. Achieve complete control over every player on the pitch. Not only the one with the ball. Play passes into space and anticipate the movement of team-mates. Pick out the player who has made the most prescient run and deliver the perfect pass to split the opposition.



Spotlight Off The Ball™ Running. Great players know that what you do without the ball matters just as much as what you do with it. Make dummy runs, find the space and pull defenders out of position. So that, when the killer ball comes your way, you're in the right place to inflict maximum pain.



Spotlight Off The Ball™ Receiving. Invade the space and then defend it. Off The Ball™ Control means that you have to fight over every inch of turf for the good of the team. And risk losing your shirt in the process. Because you need to be strong to get into the best position to receive the ball. And brilliant to bury it.



Spotlight Innovative Gameplay. The enhancements to FIFA Football 2004 don't end with Off The Ball control. In-game Team Management lets you change tactics and call plays in real-time. Plus you can create set pieces and introduce them into the action at the touch of a button thanks to Set Piece Play-Calling. It's a whole new ball game.



Spotlight Career Mode. Assume the manager's role and take your team from zeroes to heroes. The inclusion of lower league teams and stadia brings greater depth to the gameplay, with the added spice of promotion and relegation battles. If you can balance the books and take your team from nowhere to the big time in successive seasons, immortality awaits.



Spotlight Football Fusion. Get even more from FIFA this year with Football Fusion. Import a team from Total Club Manager 2004 and play their games for real in FIFA, then export the result and continue managing. You can create an all-star team in Total Club Manager 2004 and play their fixtures in your new FIFA game. Or export a team from Total Club Manager 2004 not featured in FIFA Football 2004 and play their matches in real-time.

www.fifafootball2004.ea.com



PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE



It's in the game

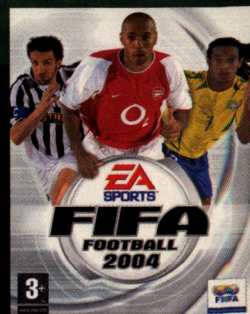


It's not what you do on the ball
It's what you do off it

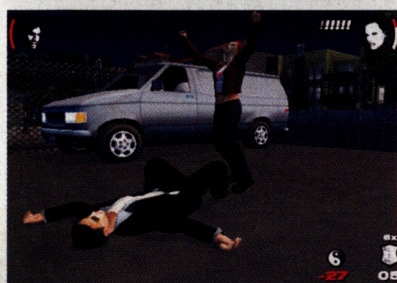


Great players know that it's what they do Off The Ball that makes them great. A world class striker is a master of Off The Ball™ Running, tearing open the defence to make himself available for the killer pass. He fights for every inch of turf, jostling with defenders to steal a yard and gain the advantage. While a great defender closes down an opponent who is on the ball so that a team mate can steam in, make the tackle and win the ball.

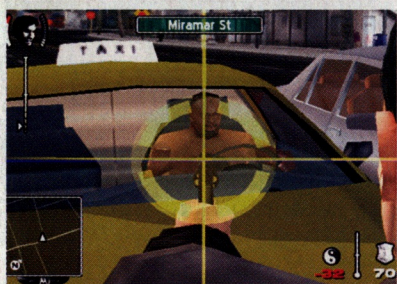
Create brilliance. With **OFF THE BALL™** Control.



It's in the game



MURDER ON THE DANCEFLOOR Yess! We've been waiting to use that caption for ages. Yess!



TRUZZUE 2 THA CRIZZIME GOTS THA MAD BEATZ, G!

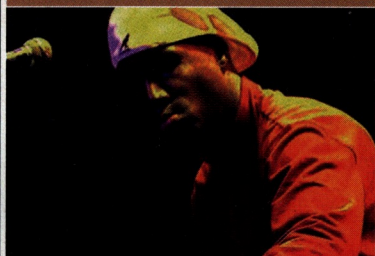
TRANSLATION FROM GANGSTA: *TRUE CRIME* CONTAINS MANY ENJOYABLE MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS. OVER 50, IN FACT. THE MOST EVER. INCLUDING:



> NERD

WHO? Pharrell Williams and crew, currently the hottest producers/artists on Earth.

LIKES: Tasty women kissing each other in the *Lapdance* video. And Justin Timberlake.



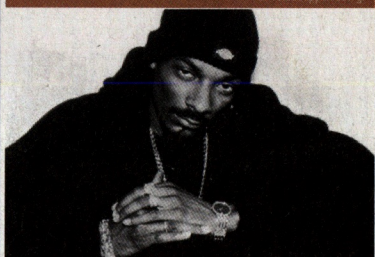
> GRANDMASTER FLASH

WHO? One of the oldest of old-school rappers.

A rap-o-saurus, if you will.*

LIKES: Not standing close to the edge. He might lose his head, you know....

*Dr. Velocirapper. Sorry.

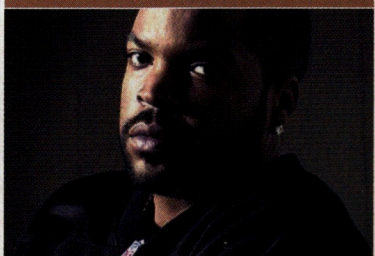


> SNOOP DOG

WHO? Made a track of his own for the game.

Bless his little dogg heart.

LIKES: Saying things like "Shizzle dizzle nizzle, bizzle." Maybe they're, like, magic spells?



> ICE CUBE

WHO? Original gangsta rapper, started out with NWA then enjoyed monster solo success.

LIKES: Not having to use his AK. That would make it a good day, it would.



PC CD-ROM

PlayStation 2



GAME BOY ADVANCE

NEW LINE CINEMA



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THE LORD OF THE RINGS

THE RETURN OF THE KING

Live the movie. Be the hero.

Coming Soon



The battle begins at lordoftherings-eagames.co.uk

Challenge Everything



> SPEED KINGS

But they're good at flying, fighting and bashing big blocks too. Say hello to Team Sonic!

"THROWS REALITY SO FAR OUT OF THE WINDOW IT'S LANDED NEXT DOOR."

SONIC HEROES

OK, SO A HEDGEHOG, AN ECHIDNA AND A FOX WITH TWO TAILS GO INTO A BAR – WHAT DO YOU MEAN, WHAT'S AN ECHIDNA? OH, NEVER MIND....

> GENRE	PLATFORM
> DEVELOPER	SEGA
> PUBLISHER	SEGA
> ETA	DECEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

THERE'S STILL A PLACE IN OUR HEARTS

where we think *Sonic* is the best thing ever. A bit of us that never moved past 1991 and would really, really like to go out with Betty Boo. Sega have made *Sonic Heroes* for this bit of us. We're thankful. And so should you be too: it's looking mad at worst, spanking at best. We've already given you the basics of the set-up, but now we've played it – played it a lot. And to be brutally honest with you, we'd forgotten that video games could be this eat-your-own-socks mad. We've been so used to trudging round dingy military installations, conserving ammo, hiding in the shadows and trying to keep the noise down that we'd almost lost sight of the fact that video games are properly mental. None more so than *Sonic Heroes*, a game that throws reality so far out the window it's landed next door and has seriously upset the neighbours.

To prove it, here's what happens when you start playing *Sonic Heroes*: a chameleon, a bee and a giant crocodile zoom onto a chequered green island and proceed to run, fly and blast their way through giant robots and rings made out of rainbows, then get in a small cart and race down tunnels, fly up onto huge destructible rocks and leap into cannons to be shot thousands of feet into the air. Sometimes, the bee picks up the other two and flies them around, leaving the crocodile suspended underneath like a gigantic scaly testicle. At other times, the crocodile picks up the two smaller characters, coats them in magic energy shields and chucks them violently at the aforementioned robots. Wibble. Those of you with an already tenuous grasp on reality are thus hereby advised to avoid all contact with *Sonic Heroes* from this day forth. For here is a game with the power to bend your fragile mind until it snaps clean in half, freeing the entire contents of your booze-addled brain – every name, every cherished memory, every heart-in-mouth girly encounter – out into the atmosphere like a flock of hungry racing pigeons.

FOLLOW THE YELLOW RABBIT

The best thing is, it all makes perfect sense. As we may have mentioned before, you control one character in your team of three while the other two run behind. Swapping between them allows you to either run faster, attack with more power or to fly for a limited time. It's pretty open-ended, too; all characters can jump, fight and run to a certain extent. If you want to fly through the whole game, nobody's going to stop you. Until you have to blast through boulders or bomb it round a huge loop, of course. Then you're screwed.

It all begins in Seaside Hill. Ignore the innocuous name. Although this is a reworking of the classic Green Hill Zone from the first ever *Sonic* game, it's actually a minefield of insanity. It's Brighton redesigned by demons. It's the Algarve after a reality quake. And the levels only get madder. After what looks to be a fairly pedestrian city level (pedestrian for a *Sonic* game, that is; utterly insane for any other game), you're plunged into a dream/nightmare world of gigantic jungle levels consisting of trees higher than skyscrapers and a 100% head-shafting Las Vegas-themed level, complete with pinball tables for knocking characters around and slot machines for winning rings. Due to the sheer scale of it all, which even dwarfs the Dreamcast's *Sonic Adventure* games, it is PSW's professional



SONIC HEROES FACT!

> WHAT IS AN ECHIDNA ANYWAY?
It's an Australian marsupial anteater with a spiny back. So now when people ask, you can show off. Or not.

> SUPERSONIC
Conservative estimates suggest that *Heroes* is up to 20% faster than *Sonic Adventure 2*. Epileptics beware!

> LEVELLING OFF
Sonic Heroes' zones are directly inspired by ones from the first *Sonic* game, like Casino and Green Hill.

> WE NEED A SPIN DOCTOR HERE
The one thing you can't do in *Heroes* is spin in a ball when you choose. Like, er, why the hell not?



EH? WHA? Knuckles whirled down a tube. It's all crazy!



BIG AREA Dark Sonic shows off the huge industrial zone.



DAILY GRIND There's a lot of single bar slipping going on.



BIGGEST FAN The teams can join hands to float up. Aww.

IT'S ALL LIES!

SORRY FOLKS. SONIC TEAM HAS BEEN LYING TO YOU ALL THIS TIME. THESE ANIMALS ARE NOTHING LIKE!

>> THE HEDGEHOG

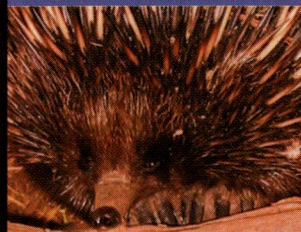


LIE> Sonic's the speed merchant here, supplying the fastest route through levels. Ironically, speed doesn't seem to be required all that much.

TRUTH> Behind the glamorous blue image, the humble hedgehog is the insect-eating klutz of the woodland world. Get a life, you spiny schlemiel!

CRAZY FACT> Hedgehogs "give off a distinctive musky odour, which is secreted by the anal glands". But then so do we, sometimes.

>> THE ECHIDNA



LIE> Knuckles hammers his enemies by throwing Sonic and Tails with pinpoint accuracy. He can also break down obstacles in the team's way.

TRUTH> Echidnas come from Australia. They're rubbish at fighting, but they can burrow large distances. They're also extremely clumsy.

CRAZY FACT> The Echidna thinks it's some kind of duck, laying weird eggs instead of giving birth. But it ain't. Duh, Echidna you so stupid!

>> THE FOX



LIE> Tails uses his multiple appendages to transport the whole team over hazardous spaces. He can only fly for short bursts, though.

TRUTH> Although the real world fox is unable to fly, it does demonstrate reserves of cunning utterly unknown to Mr Miles "Tails" Prower.

CRAZY FACT> The Japanese have a thing about multi-tailed foxes, considering them good luck. Hence Tails, probably.



FLYING SQUAD: Charmy Bee we love him - carries Chaotix.



GET BACK: It's like Sonic 1 got remade in 3D! A bit! No, it is!



HOGGING THE TABLE: The Casino world hurts our eyes.



AH, CUTE: Cream the Rabbit! And Big the Cat! Bless 'em.

WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"TAKES PLATFORM GAMING TO A COMPLETELY NEW LEVEL. USING THE THREE FORMATIONS AND THE POWERFUL MOVES THAT EACH TEAM MEMBER HAS, SONIC AND HIS FRIENDS COMBINE FORCES TO BATTLE THE ULTIMATE EVIL."

prognosis that the huge areas will more than likely completely mess with your head. Just so you know what to expect.

And we haven't even started on the bonus games. Remember them? Before anyone even knew what 3D was, back when we were impressed by anything with more than four colours, *Sonic's* bonus levels went even further into the heart of disorientating wildness, with manic games that had the hedgehog slamming himself around psychedelic tubes and squares for more and more points. Funnily enough, *Sonic Heroes'* bonus level is almost exactly the same as the one in 1992's *Sonic 2*: you run down a massive chute, collecting balloons and avoiding mines. Admittedly, *Heroes'* mini-games aren't quite as innovative as might've we'd hoped for, but they're good fun nonetheless.

THE GANG'S ALL HERE

In fact, lots of things are the same as they used to be. When he's hit, Sonic still staggers back in horrified surprise, and your stomach still lurches with fear as his collection of rings is thrown up into the air. The central characters retain most of their recognisable skills and Dr Robotnik is still the Father Christmas/Hannibal Lecter-esque genius behind all the evil. This is as it should be. Because if you've ever played *Sonic Adventure 2* on the old Sega Dreamcast, which was the last time anyone tried to update the series, you'll know it was a bit shonky in places. Sure, everything looked good, but the controls were twitchy and people didn't appreciate the more real-worldy feel. This has been sorted out for *Sonic Heroes*. It's a deliberate return to what people loved about *Sonic* in the first place. The camera holds back giving you more room to manoeuvre and we're fully back in the old, traditional world of Mobius.

At the moment, the four teams of characters [Sonic, Dark, Chaotix and Rose] don't seem to function very differently, making it a little irrelevant which one you choose. Oh, and before we forget, contrary to what we might have said in previous issues, Big the Cat and Vector the Crocodile aren't crap at all. They're the heavy hitters of their respective teams, and you should give them due respect for all their hard work [even if they do look a little bit sinister, almost as though they've been dreamt up by Peter 'I'm The Yorkshire Ripper I Am' Sutcliffe].

To be even more brutally honest than we were the last time we used the phrase "to be brutally honest", the whole team play aspect doesn't seem to make much of a difference to the game right now. You might as well have one character with three skills as three separate ones, because you only control one at a time with the other two simply coming along for the ride. Wait, wait. This isn't a bad thing. It means this is much more like the classic Megadrive *Sonic*. In fact, if we had to sum up *Sonic Heroes* in 17 words, we'd say it was "the *Sonic* game *Adventure 2* should have been, with much more emphasis on the old-school elements we love". If old-school counts as one word, that is. It does. We checked.

FIRST OPINIONS

There's still much to finish if we're going to see this game by Christmas, but *Sonic* fans are going to love what's here and relish the return to decent family gaming values. Compared with the recent sequels to *Jak and Daxter* and *Ratchet and Clank*, though, *Heroes* is going to have to work a touch harder if it's going to make anything like a lasting impression on us.

/ JOFF BROWN



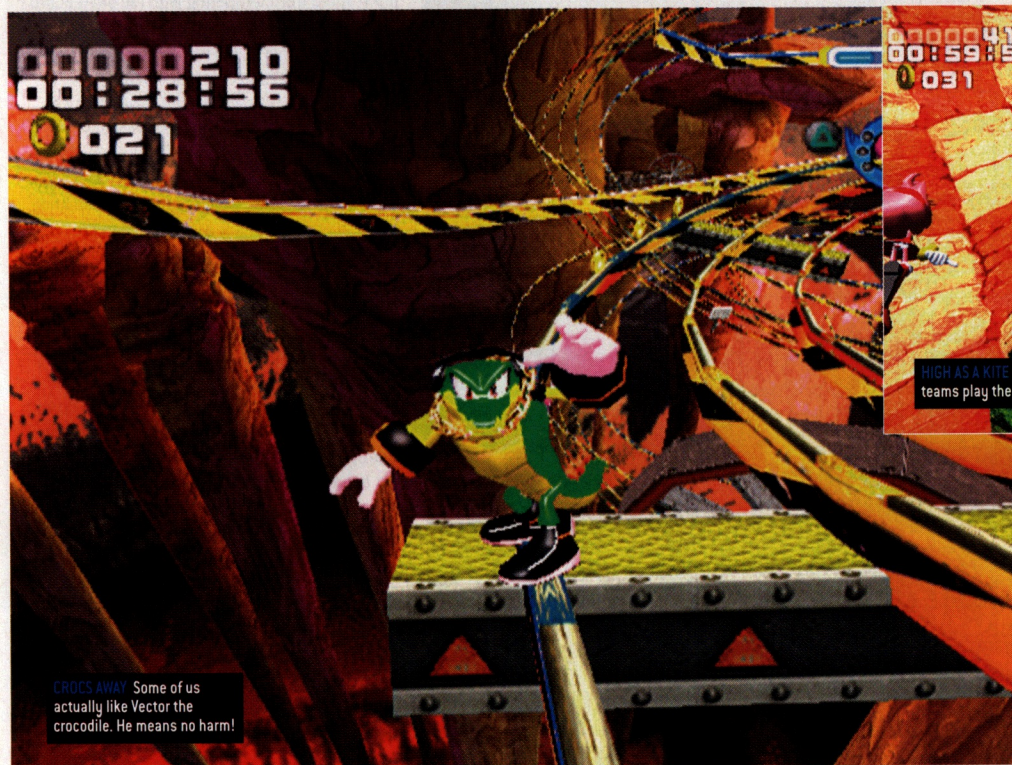
FAIRY TAILS: The poncy fox takes a rare break. Move it!



"THE BEE PICKS UP THE OTHER TWO, WITH THE CROCODILE SUSPENDED LIKE A SCALY TESTICLE."



SPANKING BOTS: The Doc's droids are back. And pissed.



CROCS AWAY: Some of us actually like Vector the crocodile. He means no harm!



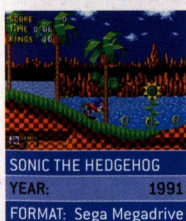
HIGH AS A KITE: But the four teams play the same now.



WHWOAR-EST: Lush levels is Sonic Heroes' thing.

SONIC TAKES AGES

BONE UP ON SOME OF WHAT HAPPENED TO THE HEDGE-PIG, PRIOR TO HEROES.



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG
YEAR: 1991
FORMAT: Sega Megadrive

Sonic burst onto the console scene and woke up sleepy platform gamers everywhere with his trademark high-speed running. It's still the classic Sonic title.



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 2
YEAR: 1992
FORMAT: Sega Megadrive

The first sequel saw Miles "Tails" Prower join the solitary mammal and instigated a rather lovely two-player mode as well. Plus, the graphics got even better, somehow.



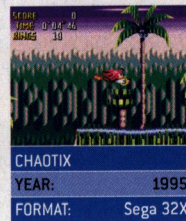
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG 3
YEAR: 1993
FORMAT: Sega Megadrive

The irascible echidna Knuckles joins the fray. [No, we don't know what irascible means either.] This one pushed the Megadrive a bit too far, and wasn't so innovative.



SONIC THE HEDGEHOG CD
YEAR: 1993
FORMAT: Sega Mega CD

Some call it a gem, others say it's far too easy, but Sonic's graphically-enhanced debut on the Megadrive's CD system was a landmark game by anyone's standards.



CHAOTIX
YEAR: 1995
FORMAT: Sega 32X

No Sonic for this one — Knuckles all the way in a game that few played and less liked. It did manage to provide the oddball Chaotix team for *Heroes*, though. Um, yay!



SONIC ADVENTURE
YEAR: 1999
FORMAT: Sega Dreamcast

Sonic blasts back with an all-3D version of his classic antics. Fans go ape, others question the newly "realistic" graphics, but Sonic had faded from the minds of many.



SONIC ADVENTURE 2
YEAR: 2001
FORMAT: Sega Dreamcast

Dreamcast's swansong was the newly refined *Sonic Adventure 2*. Better controls and even better graphics, but who played it? Nobody, that's who. Time for *Heroes*....



> I'M BOARD

Underground features thousands of new boards, none of which look like this.



"SMOKE CRACK WITH A HOOKER IN THE BACK OF A STOLEN POLICE CAR."

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD IS SENT AWAY ON GARDENING LEAVE, GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO TAKE A LEADING ROLE IN HIS LATEST GAME.

> GENRE	SPORTS
> DEVELOPER	NEVERSOFT
> PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	YES

TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND IS AROUND

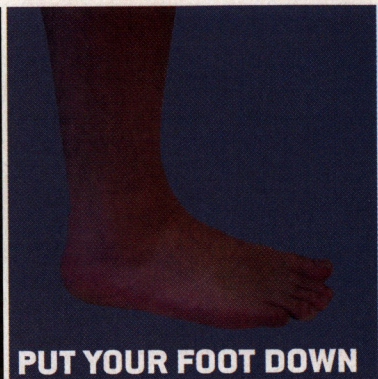
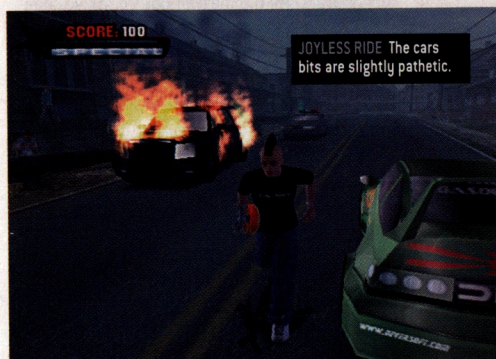
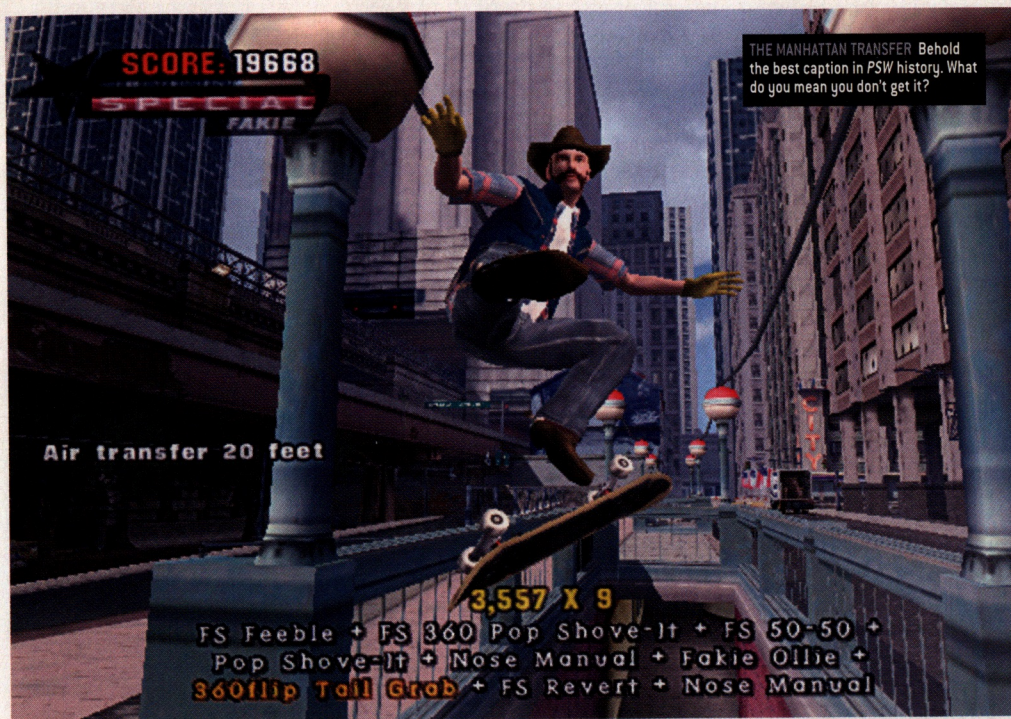
23.3% more street than *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4*. But how street is that? And how far underground is Tony prepared to go? Well, not quite the full six feet, otherwise he'd be dead, and that would be suicide news from a business standpoint as far as Activision is concerned. And he's not quite five feet under either, for although your skate punk lives in a messy bedroom located on the wrong side of the tracks, he's still very much against drug-dealing and petty thievery. A safe four feet then. Which is deep enough to be able to listen to hip-hop in expensive trousers in the company of shoplifting friends who swear and who call their parents by their first names – but not quite deep enough to smoke crack with a hooker in the back of a stolen police car.

It begins with a tap on the window. Your character, customisable to a ridiculous degree now that faces can be scanned in and pirate hats, fart-knocker beards and tattoos can be added, is interrupted from tampering with his skateboard by a close friend. Apparently Chad Muska is in town. Game begins. You move out onto the street and begin taking part in mini-tasks similar to those found in the previous four *Tony* games. Retrieve five pieces of stolen skateboard scattered over the city. Score 10,000 points to impress the locals. Perform a sequence of tricks on command. Succeed in enough of these and you and your character will move onto the next narrative chunk, which has Muska finally arriving for his demonstration. This is how the story in *Underground* works, by grouping together an assortment of missions into a building block of the ongoing story. The plot is very loose in a *Grand Theft Auto 3* kind of a way – a large percentage of your tasks have nothing to do with your rise from the slums of New Jersey to the champagne-filled sauna of Famosusness at all – but it succeeds in kneading the levels together into a pleasantly doughy, malleable whole.

"I'M SORRY. THERE'S BEEN A CAR ACCIDENT."

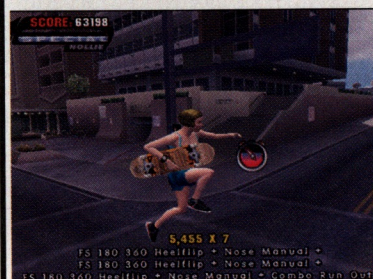
Things go well. Muska is impressed by your loose-limbed display of aerial foolishness and gives you a new board. And then you accidentally walk in front of a driving mission and your enjoyment is killed on impact. Frankly, the car sections are lousy. We always knew they would be. The handling is plain wrong (as one PSW wag pointed out, it feels as though you're driving a massive skateboard), the physics are way off and, presumably due to the fact that you're driving around areas designed first and foremost for far smaller vehicles, the tracks feel cluttered and square. Immediately after that you experience your first on-foot mission, which has you creeping through town to recover a skateboard from some smackheads. Again, lousiness personified and wearing bad shoes.

Leading us to conclude that the world would be a far better place if the *Tony Hawk's Underground* developers had never played *Grand Theft Auto 3*. If we could go back in time with a shotgun, a floor-length leather jacket and a terrifying scowl and find the shop assistant who sold developer Neversoft their copy of *GTA3*, we would. Sadly we can't. Apart from anything, we're all vegans. A floor-length kaftan just wouldn't look the same. You take our point. When your character is skating, *Underground* is a staggering work of leg-breaking genius. When your character is



PUT YOUR FOOT DOWN

WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN YOU JUMP OFF YOUR BOARD AND TAKE TO THE STREETS ON FOOT?



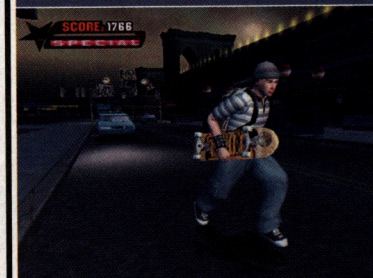
> CONTINUE YOUR COMBO!

You can get off your board at any time by pressing L1 and R1 at the same time. Do so during a combo and you'll have until the counter runs down to get back on your board and carry on.



> SWING FROM THE ROOFTOPS!

On foot you can jump onto rooftops and monkey-dangle across telephone lines to reach items, ramps and areas that otherwise would be out of bounds. It's all a bit Tomb Raider if we're honest.



> HANG AROUND IN THE SHADOWS!

A small handful of the missions ban you from using your board and force to sneak your way through the playing area avoiding the roaming sentries. *Metal Gear Solid* gone wrong.



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND FACT!

> LEGENDS OF THE FALLING OVER

A host of name skaters turn up to make cameos to teach you new tricks and to hand down old equipment.

> FACE IT

You can change the faces of all civilians and write lines of dialogue for them to recite. Gay jokes at the ready.

> PLAY BRIDGE

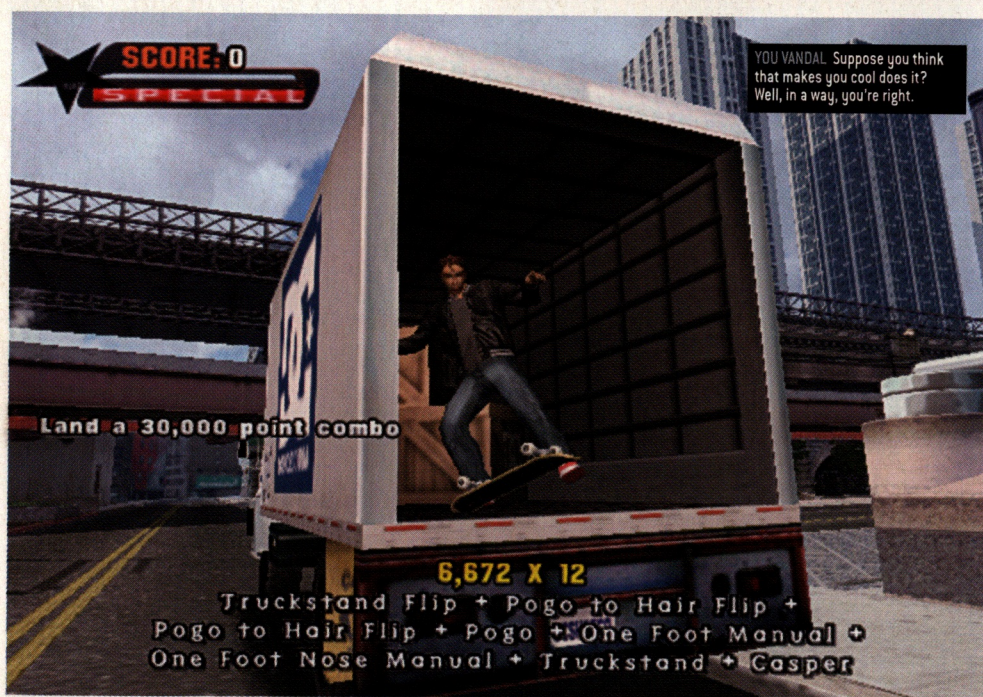
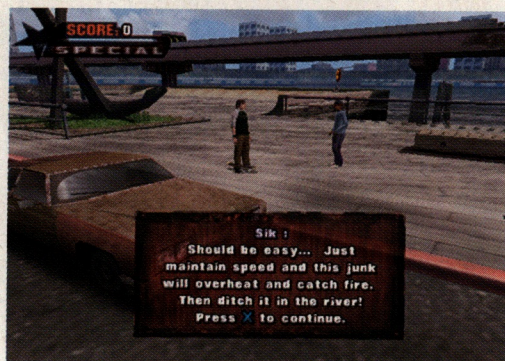
The first level ends with you making a ramp, then grabbing the back of a car and catapulting yourself over a bridge.

> FASTER, FASTER, FASTER

Underground plays much faster than *Tony 4*. Even so, veterans won't take long to get back into it.



“OLD HIGH SCORES WILL BE SMASHED LIKE FALLING POPADUMS.”



WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

“WE’VE COMPLETELY REBUILT THE GAME. YOU’VE NOW GOT FAR MORE FREEDOM TO MOVE THROUGH THE WORLD WE’VE CREATED, PLUS THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST CUSTOMISABLE VIDEOGAMES YOU’LL HAVE EVER PLAYED.”

either running or driving, it isn’t.

Fear not, for even two Achilles’ heels cannot hamper *Tony Hawk’s* inevitable march to greatness; in spite of all this we still can’t stop ourselves from *Underground* at this moment in time. And that’s because the skateboarding – the heartbeat of the game – is, as ever, exceptional. The levels are more forgiving than the rather spiky *Tony 4* offerings, allowing far greater scope for the big combos. The fact that you can jump off your board, jog to a better vantage point, jump back on and continue the combo you were midway through also helps. So much so, in fact, that we confidently predict personal bests and high-scores racked up on previous *Tony* games will be smashed like falling popadums within hours of your first foray *Underground*.

I FOUGHT THE LAW

Once you’ve cleared New Jersey, convincing the owner of your local skate store to give you a sponsorship deal, you make for Tampa with the intention of taking part in a big-money competition. On the way, you get pulled over by the fuzz. Apparently you’ve got a faulty tail-light. The policemen, a wry smile wandering slowly northwards across his crumpled face, tugs on his belt and suggests that maybe if you perform a few “favours” for him he’ll let you go. We’ve seen this situation countless times before – a redneck southern cop with a hard-on for sex and humiliation takes out decades of self-loathing on the rear-end of a naïve out-of-towner – but luckily for you he means actual favours (“Get your hands on some donuts boy.”) and not sexual favours (“Put your hands up my hairy donut boy.”) Four feet underground and no more. From here you move into central Tampa and enter into your first actual competition. And so it goes, your profile within the skate scene rising and rising with every passing tailgrab.

Underground is a fine game indeed, one that we confidently predict will move the *Tony Hawk* series onto the next phase of its evolutionary development. Our love affair with *Underground* has already reached an almost unbearable intensity, even before we’ve been sent the final game to review. To give you some indication, the dead skin harvested from blisters accrued over one day’s play would be enough to feed all the starving children in all of Africa for the next ten years. And there’s so much more to it than just the single-player story game. Tricks can be created, skate-parks designed and challenges issued, meaning gamers with fertile imaginations and time to spare have all the tools required to piece their own game together. Astounding.

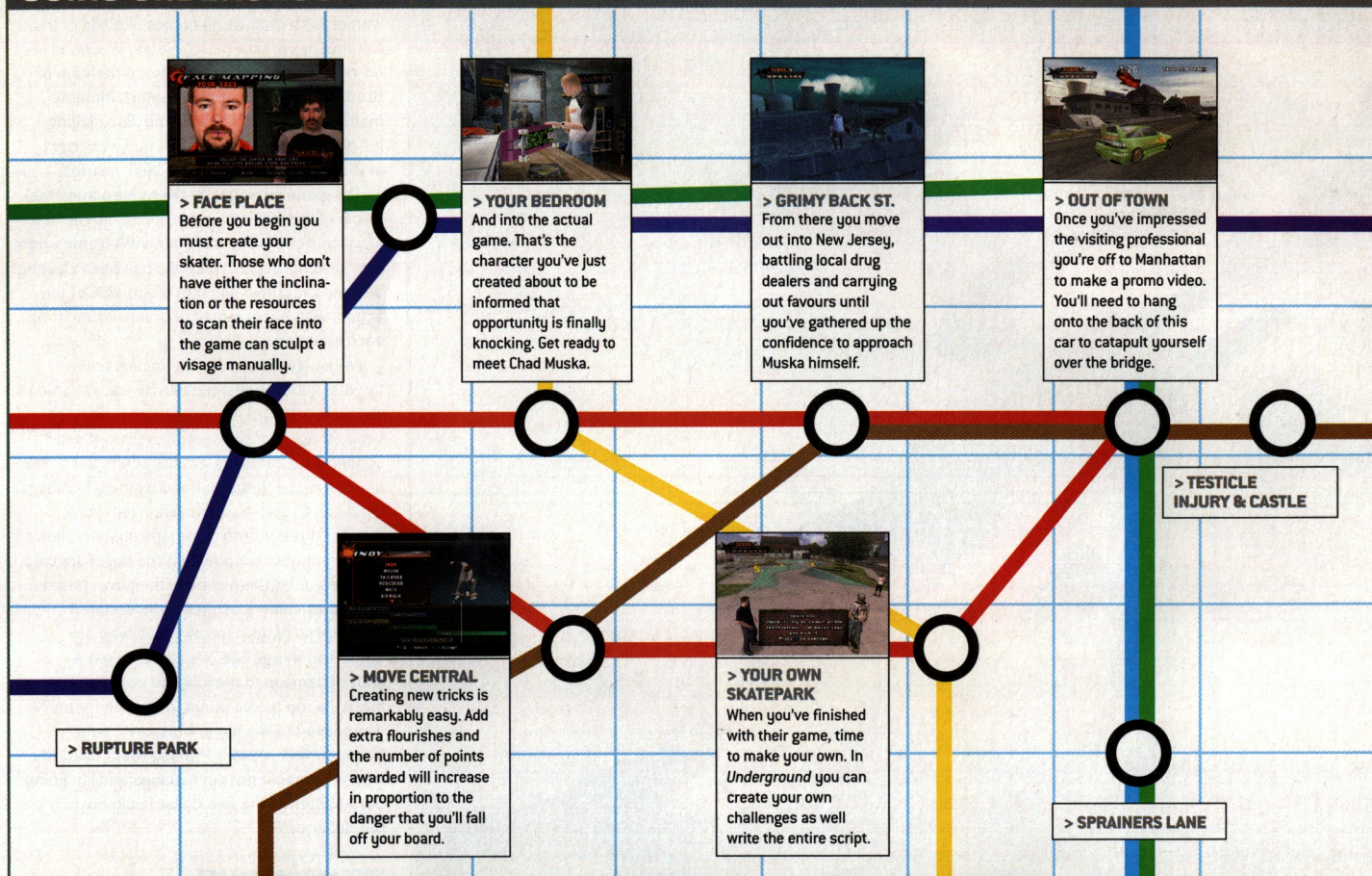
Admittedly, we wish there was a way of wiping *Underground* clean of *GTA3*’s greasy fingerprints, a way to erase the driving and walking missions from both our and our PS2’s memory, but that’s never going to happen. We’ll all have to just have to grimace and bear it. Three minutes of concentrated suffering has to be worth a lifetime of happiness though doesn’t it? Hate to say it, but we won’t be able to say for sure until next month.

FIRST OPINIONS

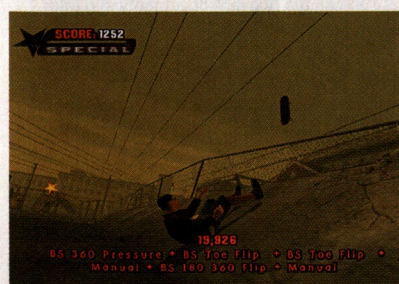
As the curtain comes down on our preview, we rise to our feet like the Nazi officers at the end of *Escape to Victory* to whole-heartedly applaud developer Neversoft for successfully reinventing the *Tony Hawk* series. Because, in spite of *Underground*’s flaws, it would seem that at the fifth time of asking they may well have produced a near-perfect skateboarding game. And that’s a considerable achievement.

/ JON BROWN

GOING UNDERGROUND A HANDY POCKET GUIDE TO TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND



URBAN LEGEND It wants to be "street" so badly but it falls just short. "Bacon bits"? How cute.



BS 360 + SCRAMBLED + EGGS Try to do too much and you'll fall.



SMALL TOWN BLUES Your home town is a complete dump.



HANGING (WITH) CHAD He's famous. That's why he's wearing shades in a car with tinted windows.



>Wings of war

Take control of some of the world's ugliest, maddest planes and fight for England!



“MAKES YOU WISH YOU WERE BACK IN WORLD WAR II. WELL, NEARLY.”

SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY

I SAY? ARE YOU CHAPS UP FOR A SPOT OF JERRY-BASHING IN THE SKIES OVER DUNKIRK? LAST ONE IN THE AIR'S A ROTTEN EGG!

> GENRE	FLIGHT SIM
> DEVELOPER	LUCASARTS
> PUBLISHER	ACTIVISION
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	NO

WORLD WAR II, EH? JUST A FEW YEARS AGO,

we associated the years between 1939 and 1945 with powdered egg, David Niven and women with disgusting names like Ada or Iris. Not any more. Now there's *Secret Weapons over Normandy*, carrying on the proud tradition of turning WWII into top-class entertainment instead, with so much airborne Jerry-killing it's enough to make you wish you were right in the middle of World War II. Well, nearly.

The game puts you on the move across the whole of the war-torn globe, including North Africa and the [very-trendy-in-WWII-games-right-now] Pacific. *Secret Weapons* has been cleverly designed to throw you into the middle of the action, with every ounce of drama wrung from each situation.

As you get to choose the tactics and targets, you'll be responsible for each mission's success or failure. Bomb the fuel dumps, or head straight for the destroyers out at sea? Concentrate on taking out the enemy air aces, or remove the threat of the oncoming bombers? It's all up to you. A simple (we mean very simple) three button command system allows you to put your wingmen on the tail of specific enemies or let them choose their own targets. We're particularly loving the understated Britishness of your fellow pilots, who are apt to say things like, "I say, I've taken a spot of damage to the jolly old wing. Looks like it's a trip to see mater in Heaven for me," as opposed to the more American, "Holy Shinola! We're screwed! Those Kraut bastards ripped off my Goddamn fuselage and I'm going down faster than a five-dollar hooker with a ten-dollar tip!"

ENGLAND ÜBER ALLES

Planes include classics like the Hurricane and Spitfire (yeh-hay! Surely every red-blooded man's man in the land loves the Spitfire), but also some of the more obscure, collectors' planes like the Fairey Swordfish (we shit you not) and the ridiculously unflyable, but at the same time unfeasibly fast Me 163 Komet. They all have their part to play in the conflict, and capturing enemy craft means you'll be able to sneak behind enemy lines during certain missions and see what it's like to play as the other side. If you know what we mean.

If you manage to beat the cocky Brits – that's us – at challenges like dogfighting and shooting down waves of enemies, then you'll be given requisition orders for upgrades to your various craft. See the "Crate Expectations" box for more. And then there's the quality of the graphics. Not only is every tree, road and bridge rendered perfectly, but so is every single building you'll fly over. It's a treat for veterans and war newbies alike. In fact, the only dark cloud we can see on the horizon is that the handling might prove a little bit too simplistic for flight sim fans. Either way, we'll give you a full need-to-know review as soon as the relevant documents slip into our hands. Dismissed!

FIRST OPINIONS

We haven't been this taken with a flying game since we saw the excellent *Ace Combat: Distant Thunder* ages ago, but we haven't actually seen a flying game since then either. So we're lucky that *Secret Weapons* is shaping up to be the biggest thing to happen to World War II since a crap watercolour painter called Adolf tried to grow the world's smallest moustache.

/ JOFF BROWN

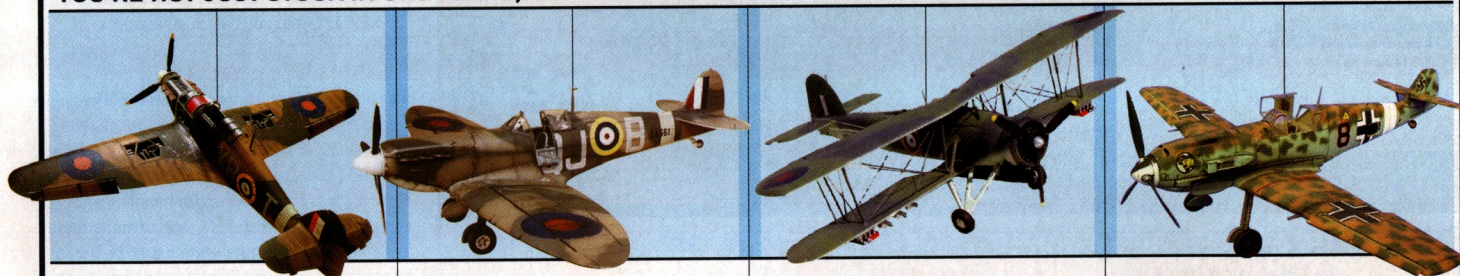


FLY BOYS Every detail you could imagine is here. Even goggles.

SUN AND AIR Landscapes extend for virtual miles over the UK.

CRATE EXPECTATIONS

YOU'RE NOT JUST STUCK IN ONE PLANE, OLD CHAP. HERE'S A FEW OF THE BIRDS YOU'LL BE PILOTING.



HAWKER HURRICANE

This old stalwart finished off more enemy bogies in the Second World War than you've had microwaved TV dinners. Your first crate, and the weakest of the bally lot.

SPITFIRE

We never realised before, but in terms of machine guns, the Supermarine Spitfire is mental. Seriously, the Spitfire will f*** you up. It's the Glock of WWII planes.

FAIREY SWORDFISH

Wave hello to possibly the least heterosexually named thing since time began. A World War One relic, but great for lobbing low-level torpedoes at evil boats.

MESSERSCHMITT BF-109

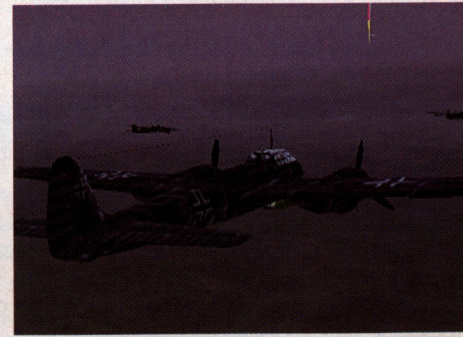
Ah, the Messerschmitt. Even its name resounds with Nazi evil. Apart from those cute mad 50s cars. Why, they've got about as much to do with Nazis as the VW Beetle!



PEARL HARBOUR II Revenge of the Yanks. Well, it could happen, couldn't it?



PLANE AND SIMPLE Upgrading each of your deathmobiles is child's play.



PIE IN THE SKY If by "pie" we mean "plane". Which we do. We're sorry.

SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY FACT!

> WE'VE GOT THE SECRET

As well as the authentic movie reel-type cut scenes, there's a selection of "making of" movies too.

> PRESENT AND CORRECT

Actual old planes were hauled out of retirement and sampled for the correct sounds. Bally good show.

> TOTALLY GROUNDED

As well as bombing and dogfighting, there's also a touch of ground to air assault as you man massive cannons.

> GREAT PEDIGREE

The LucasArts people who created this also had a hand in making every PC fan's favourite Star Wars game X-Wing.



> LOCAL DERBY

Arenas will be playable online. If you've got the Broadband adapter and some mates.



“DRAWS OUR EYE LIKE AN EXPOSED THONG IN A QUEUE FOR THE CASH MACHINE.”

DESTRUCTION DERBY ARENAS

TWISTED METAL, BLOWN OUT TYRES, BADLY BROKEN BODIES!
DESTRUCTION DERBY ARENAS IS LIKE AN M4 PILE UP! ONLY FUN!

> GENRE	RACING
> DEVELOPER	STUDIO 33
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> ETA	NOVEMBER
> ONLINE	YES

IF YOU'VE NEVER EXPERIENCED THE THRILL OF

a real Destruction Derby then stop whatever you're doing right now and get yourself down to your nearest race track as soon as humanly possible. Wimbledon and Great Yarmouth are two good tracks that spring to mind. For there, you will not only enjoy the awesome sight of a battered old three-wheel Cortina, its rear axle bent up at a frighteningly acute angle, trying to hammer a reinforced '69 Chevy to death via the medium of head-on collisions, but you'll also savour a grease-soaked menu of undercooked chips in damp, cardboard cartons, unusually young and oddly spritely barmaids serving slightly warm, flat pints at the bar and a heaving betting shop run by a freakish old lady with gin-soaked breath and a beard that would put even the boys from ZZTop to shame.

Salt of the Earth people for sure, but an evening of entertainment you're not likely to forget, especially when some hapless member of the St John's Ambulance crew tries running across the track to help pull a driver out of a pile-up, only to get run down half-way over by some mad bastard roaring about in a souped-up Capri Ghia glistening with sharpened bull bars. In a word: quality.

But just in case that doesn't sound like your kind of thing, there's always Sony's *Destruction Derby Arenas* to look forward to. It might not feature the jeering army of unwashed, benefit squandering spectators that the real thing lays claim to, but it still boasts some of the most entertaining racing and crashing action this side of a paparazzi chase through a Parisian autoroute tunnel. Did somebody say "tasteless"?

PEDAL THROUGH THE METAL

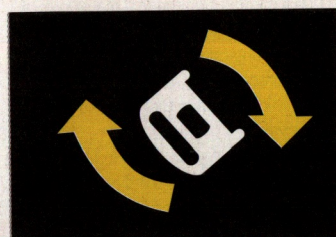
It's been a while since we took our world exclusive first look at *DDA* in issue 41. Back then we were immediately impressed by what a big, colourful racer *DDA* was shaping up to be. Less impressive, however, was the non-descript handling and computer-controlled drivers, who demonstrated less road sense and intelligence than Maureen Rees on half a gallon of methylated spirits with a splash of tonic.

A few months down the road, however, we see that development team Studio 33 has been busy addressing these little problems in the interim (no time to sit around smoking fags and playing pool in this industry). As a result, things have really started to come together for *Destruction Derby Arenas* and, while we're not betting men or anything (except for when it comes to football. And the horses. And the dogs. And the Christmas number one. Oh, and the lottery. Saturday and Wednesday), it would be wise a fiver that's placed on *DDA* firmly re-establishing *Destruction Derby* as the premiere name in PlayStation-based "fun" racing experiences.

What continues to draw our eye, much like an exposed thong in a queue for the cash machine, is the amount of character *DDA* exhibits. Thick black comic book lines and bold, upbeat colours are the order of the day for a game that takes Americana and muscle cars to its heart. Of the 20 over-the-top drivers that populate the world of *DDA* (just four selectable from the start, the other 16 available once you've given them a sound thrashing on their home track), not a single one can be described as non-descript. If that makes sense. From the heaving bosom of circuit lovely Toffee, to the baby's bottom smooth scalp of The >



CRASH LAUDER F1'S HORRIFIC CRASH MAESTRO, NIKKI LAUDER, TALKS AUTO CARNAGE.



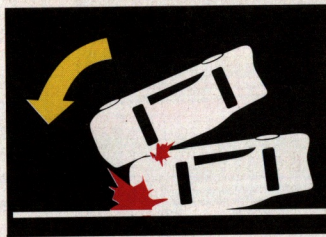
CAR FLIP

Barrel roll the car 360 degrees and carry on driving. Looks impressive. Also hurts.

NIKKI RATING



As seen in: *The Man with the Golden Gun*. Hard but sure to impress top-heavy girls.



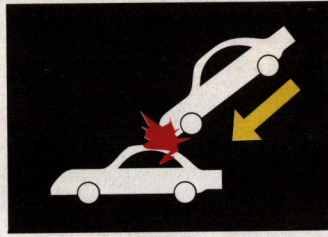
BARRIER SMASH

Force your opponent's car into the side hoardings at extreme high speed.

NIKKI RATING



As seen in: *Days of Thunder*. Driving dirty left Cruise in a wheelchair. Be careful.



ROOF CRUSH

Launch yourself off a ramp to land on top of an opponent's car. Tough but fun.

NIKKI RATING



As seen in: *2 Fast 2 Furious*. Walker gets the take-off right but misses the landing.



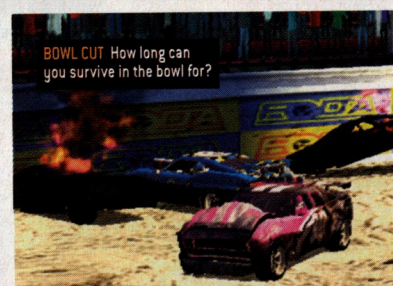
DEATH

Smash into your opponent again and again and again until he dies.

NIKKI RATING



As seen in: *Final Destination 2*. Not a pleasant way to go kids, trust us.



DESTRUCTION DERBY ARENAS FACT!

> ON TARGET AND ONLINE

Still well on track for a pre-Christmas release, it's the debut online elements that interest us the most.

> CARMAGEDDON

There are 20 deformable cars on offer, each one fully customisable. That's a lot of potential scrap metal.

> DRIVE OF YOUR AFTERLIFE

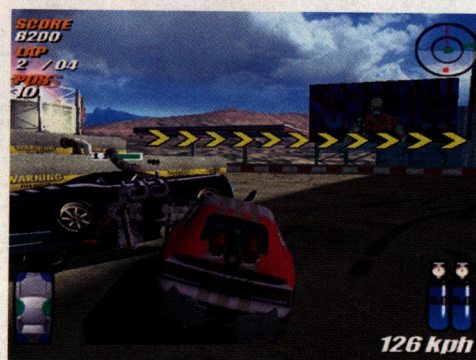
Score points for barrel rolling, nudging another car into the side hoardings and killing a rival driver. Nice.

> GOD BLESS AMERICANA

There's a bold, comic-book art style throughout, similar to the look and feel of *XIII*. Only with cars.



HIT AND RUN The handling still needs work. Hope someone's listening...



POSITIVE SPIN Flip the car right over onto its roof to score a huge bonus.



WHAT THE MAKERS SAY

"THE IMPROVED GRAPHICS AND GAME ENGINE MADE AVAILABLE ON THE NEXT-GENERATION PLATFORM RESTORE THE REALISM AND THEREFORE THE SATISFACTION OF DESTRUCTION RACING."

Victim – who's anything but once he starts putting his foot down around the tracks – it's clear that much time and attention has been lavished on giving *DDA*'s competition mode a real sense of community. You're not just any old flash-in-the-pain driver looking for his next appointment with a neck brace, you're a fully fleshed out individual amid a bustling tour of close friends and bitter rivals.

While *DDA* doesn't go so far as to fill the game with *TOCA Race Driver* style plots and cut-sequences, this emphasis on identifiable characters gives plenty of extra impetus during the races. Depending on who you choose to race as, certain drivers will look to take you out (quite brutally in some cases), while others become priority targets for a good, solid ramming. And we all know how painful that can be, don't we boys? Right boys? Boys? Back me up on this one.

DRIVING MOST CRAZY

Competition wise there're only two words that really matter here: damage and collateral. Each round consists of the same format – three races followed by a destruction derby in one of the game's themed arenas – and while winning each race is certainly going to help your cause, it's points you're racing for, not position. So long as you're driving into every other car and piece of destructible scenery going, everything else becomes secondary.

That means judicious use of your nitrous oxide tanks when slamming into an opponent's vehicle, hitting as many ramps as possible for the express purpose of landing on the roof of other cars and driving over as many destruction items as possible. Collecting destruction items triggers anything from the appearance of a huge cargo airplane, which uses the centre of the track as a runway, to a *Speed 2: Cruise Control*-style yacht crash, straight across your racing line.

Of course, the real star of the *Destruction Derby Arenas* party is the debut appearance of online compatibility. Not content with offering the standard split-screen four-player experience, *DDA* is currently waving its willy about with a fine selection of online game modes that can cater for anything up to 20 players at a time.

OK, so *Gran Turismo 4* it's not (the lifelike handling of Kazunori's petrol-scented masturbatory masterpiece taking a very back seat to a more *Sega Rally*, arcade-style of drift cornering) but *DDA* is right up there with the likes of *Fire Warrior* and the new *Medal of Honor* game, as a game worth investing in the PS2 network adaptor for. It's true that we're still not that excited by much of what PS2 online has to offer, but for *DDA* we're making an exception.

Twenty-player online smashathons or not, there's no doubting that *Destruction Derby Arenas* is looking like a worthy return to form for the *Destruction Derby* name. We're just glad that it's coming in a low-riding pink Cadillac with flames painted down the side.

FIRST OPINIONS

The *Destruction Derby* name has been synonymous with PlayStation since the console's earliest days, so much expectation is riding on whether *DDA* can keep the franchise going. From what we've seen so far it looks like *DDA* is every bit as good as its prequels, if not better, thanks to a healthy injection of character and plenty of online options. All of which means that *Arenas* should hopefully provide the perfect alternative to those of you who can't stomach the po-faced realism of *Gran Turismo 4*.

/ MARK ROBINS

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PlayStation®2



The Ultimate Tactical Simulation

Dynasty TacticsTM 2

三國志戰記

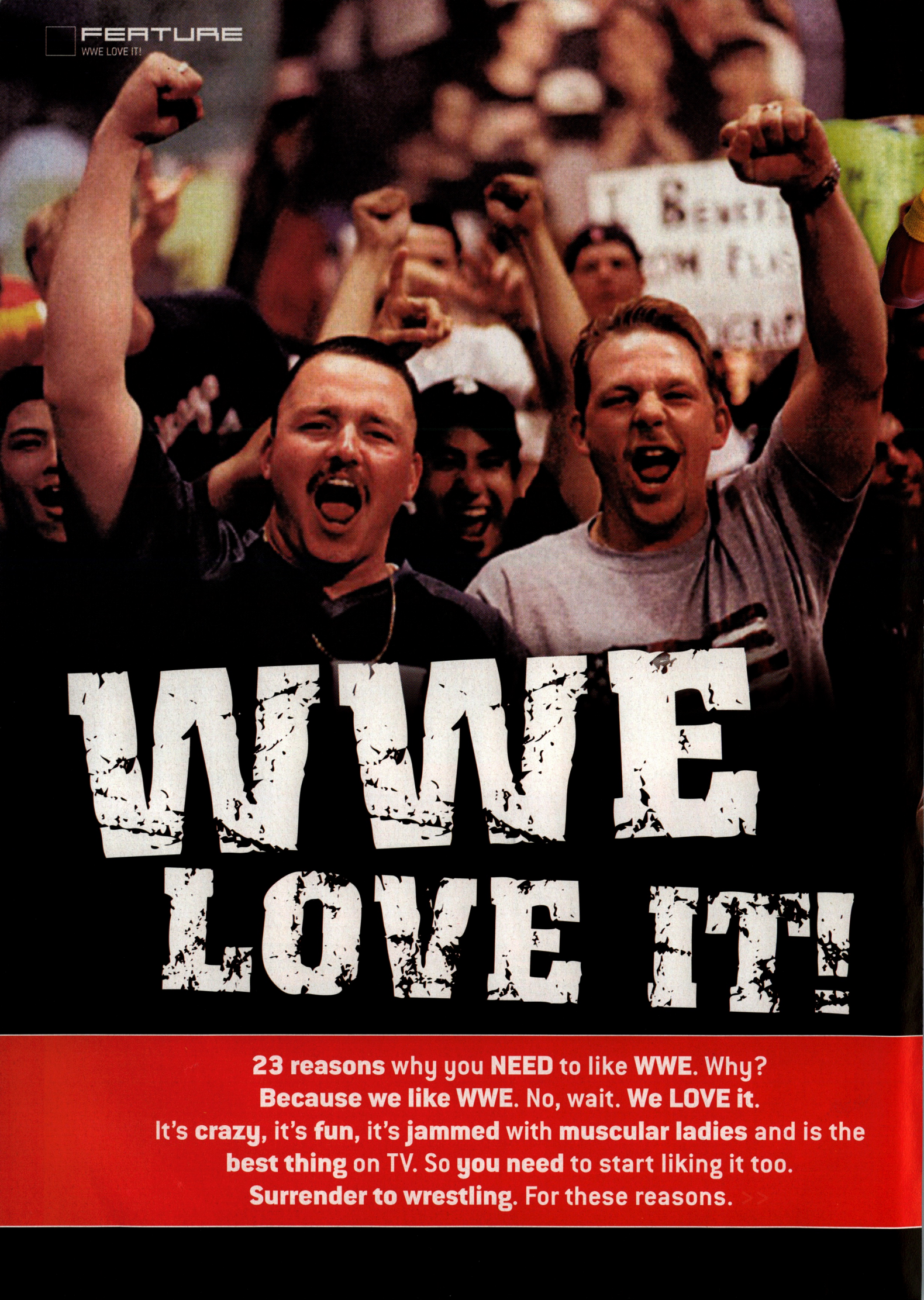


The Sequel to IGNPS2's 2002 Reader's Choice for Best Strategy Game!

- ◎Unleash Multiple Tactics in a Single Turn
- ◎New Tactical Chain System
- ◎Play as Lu Bu, Cao Cao, Sun Ce, or Liu Bei
- ◎Epic New Stories with Multiple Branches and Endings
- ◎Twice the Number of Tactics as the Original
- ◎Join Allied Officers for Devastating Team Tactics

November 2003

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WWE LOVE IT!

**23 reasons why you NEED to like WWE. Why?
Because we like WWE. No, wait. We LOVE it.
It's crazy, it's fun, it's jammed with muscular ladies and is the
best thing on TV. So you need to start liking it too.
Surrender to wrestling. For these reasons. >>**



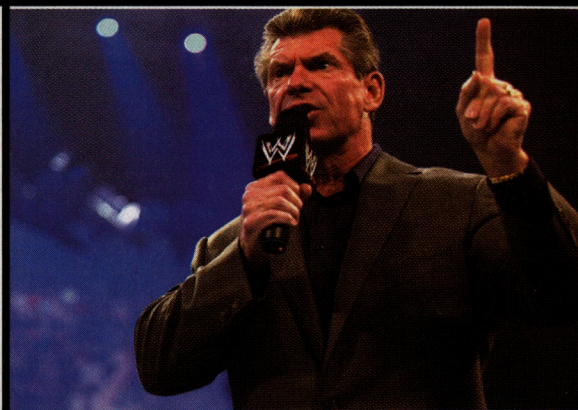
#23 WWE GIVES HOPE TO THE ELDERLY

If Ric Flair and Hulk Hogan can still fight and jump around like teenagers, then maybe Grandad doesn't have to go into a home. And what about the rest of them? Undertaker's pushing 40, and the almost completely made out of leather Randy Savage is said to be negotiating a comeback at the age of, ooh, about 60. Wrestlers don't age in WWE, they just take it easier and stop doing moves that require them to bend down.



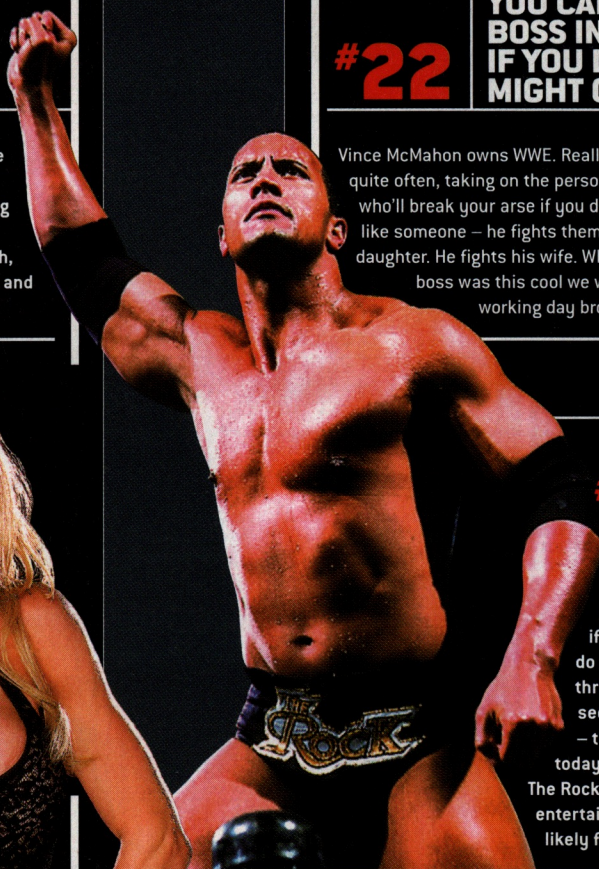
#20 IT'S THE BEST PORN YOU CAN GET ON TV AT 10:00AM IN THE MORNING

It's still another 12 hours before Men & Motors gets going and you want some gratuitous nudity – so watch wrestling. You're guaranteed at least a couple of gussets and loads of cleavage, plus if you're lucky there'll be some special underwear-themed lady matches. And for a Saturday morning, there's nothing better. OK, so Fearne wears some nice skirts on BBC1, but wouldn't you rather see two women fighting?



#22 YOU CAN PUNCH YOUR BOSS IN THE FACE, AND IF YOU DO IT WELL, YOU MIGHT GET A PAY RISE.

Vince McMahon owns WWE. Really, in real life. Better still, he fights quite often, taking on the persona of this angry, really hard man who'll break your arse if you don't play by his rules. If he doesn't like someone – he fights them. He fights his son. He fights his daughter. He fights his wife. What a way to do business. If our boss was this cool we wouldn't spend so much of our working day browsing job web sites.



#21 THE ROCK

He's hardly in it these days, now he's some big shot movie star, but if you're nine years old seeing Rocky do the People's Elbow is the most thrilling thing on TV. Think back to first seeing an Arnold Schwarzenegger flick – that's how big The Rock is to kids today. He could snap Vin Diesel in half. The Rock is the future of cinema, wrestling, entertainment and sport, and he'll very likely father your children too.



#19 IT'S ALL FAKE

Have you seen REAL extreme fighting? It's rubbish. They always end up on the floor squirming around, then it ends and you don't know who won, or why. Real fights are rubbish. Pretend fights are best. No-one gets hurt and the girls can join in too.

#18 THEY COME ROUND TO YOUR PLACE

Twice a year, the WWE superstars draw lots to see who's unlucky enough to have to fly over to the UK. This year, on October 11 and 12, they came over here to do business for our pleasure. Two shows in Birmingham and Manchester called *Passport to Pain* gave Britons the chance to watch men fight without the fear of getting bottled in the face themselves. As usual for American sports stars trying to make a splash, all the bad guys disrespected the Queen, cricket, black taxis, red buses and fish & chips to really aggravate the crowd. Like they always do. But it still hurts. Come over here if you must, but LEAVE THE QUEEN ALONE.

#17

CUT THEM, DO THEY NOT BLEED?

They usually save the bloody stuff for the important pay per views – you can't have The Rock losing a pint of his blood every week. It's not fake blood, it's their own. They bleed as part of their job. Whether or not they nick themselves with a hidden razor blade to make it flow better or not is another point. The fact is, they bleed. They bleed for YOU. They bleed on television and they bleed for your amusement. You owe it to them to watch.



#16

THE "SPECIAL" LADY MATCHES

They have to make women's matches more interesting somehow. Problem is, the ladies' lighter, flimsier, less steroid-pumped bodies don't make such a BOOM on the ring floor as the blokes' do, which makes lady fighting much less of a spectacle than your late-night fantasies imagine it should be. So, to stop everyone losing interest, they fight in their pants or they fight in bikinis or ball gowns. Often they fight in their clothes, with the aim being to pull them off each other.

Pictured above is the world's first – and probably only – Thong Stink Face Match, where the winner was the first lady to rub her arse in the face of their fallen opponent. There was a good reason for it at the time, honest. Honorary knighthoods all round, we say, for whoever thought that up.

#15

THE "STEEL" CHAIRS

We'd like to put one of the "steel" chairs through an airport x-ray machine. Steel? They bend a bit too easily, but even so, the noise and spectacle of a full whack to the face is superb. We challenge you not to cringe as chair connects with face. Steel or not, watching men get hit with chairs is essential TV viewing.

#14

IT'S NOT AS RUBBISH AS BACKYARD WRESTLING.

Don't be fooled by these girls – they're models hired to mask the true horror of *Backyard Wrestling*. The inset photo is what it *really* looks like; it's the cheapest, tackiest, lowest-rent alternative to WWE yet created. It's like wrestling for idiots, by idiots and starring idiots. Don't touch this with a barge pole – unless you're using the pole to BEAT IT TO DEATH.



#13**SKY ONE'S
RIDICULOUS
EDITING
POLICY**

Sometimes it has to be seen to be believed. Bizarre and seemingly arbitrary edits are made to keep viewers happy on a Saturday morning. It's OK to show two women pulling each others' hair out, but not OK for kids to see a man get smashed through a balsa wood table-type piece of furniture? The camera cuts to the crowd if a man raises his hands to a woman, but lingers on the action if it's two ladies

Sometimes, when it's too hard to cut to the crowd, Sky pauses the action then resumes it once the offending second has passed. Please, we're not going to copy it. We're not going to try it at home.

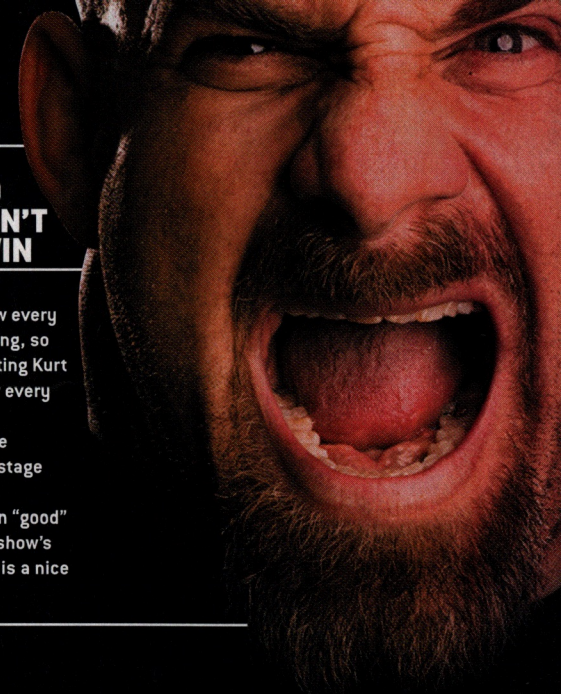
Mum would go mad if we broke the table.

Show it properly.

#11**THE GOOD
GUY DOESN'T
ALWAYS WIN**

Seriously. They've got to make a show every week of the year and keep it interesting, so you can't just have Brock Lesnar beating Kurt Angle in the last seconds of the show every week or it'd get dull. It's always a surprise who triumphs, with the title changing hands as often as the backstage tube of Deep Heat.

And with wrestlers turning between "good" and "bad" sides on the whims of the show's writers, who's to say if Goldberg here is a nice guy or a baddie anyway?

**#10****WWE
HAS NEVER
HAD BIG
DADDY IN IT**

And do you know why? Because he was a fat, rubbish old man who was only famous for being a fat, rubbish old man. All he did was point at people – like that's scary. US wrestling is ten million times better than old UK wrestling ever was. Anyone who says different is wrong, old, and most importantly, blind to the heavenly light of WWE.

#09**THE
STORYLINES**

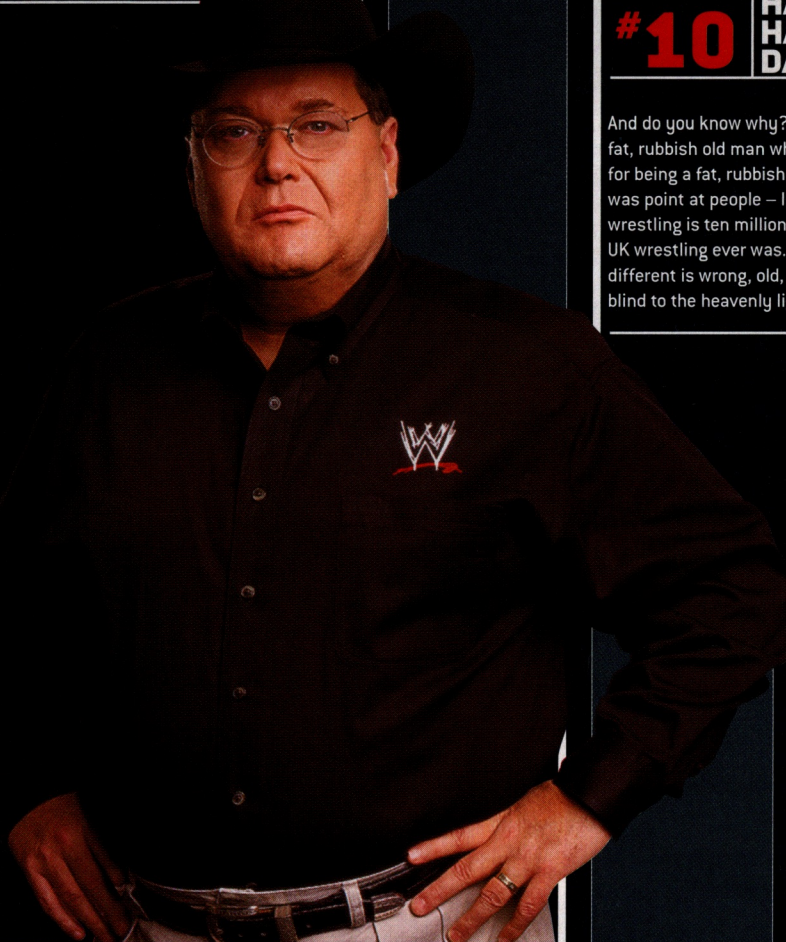
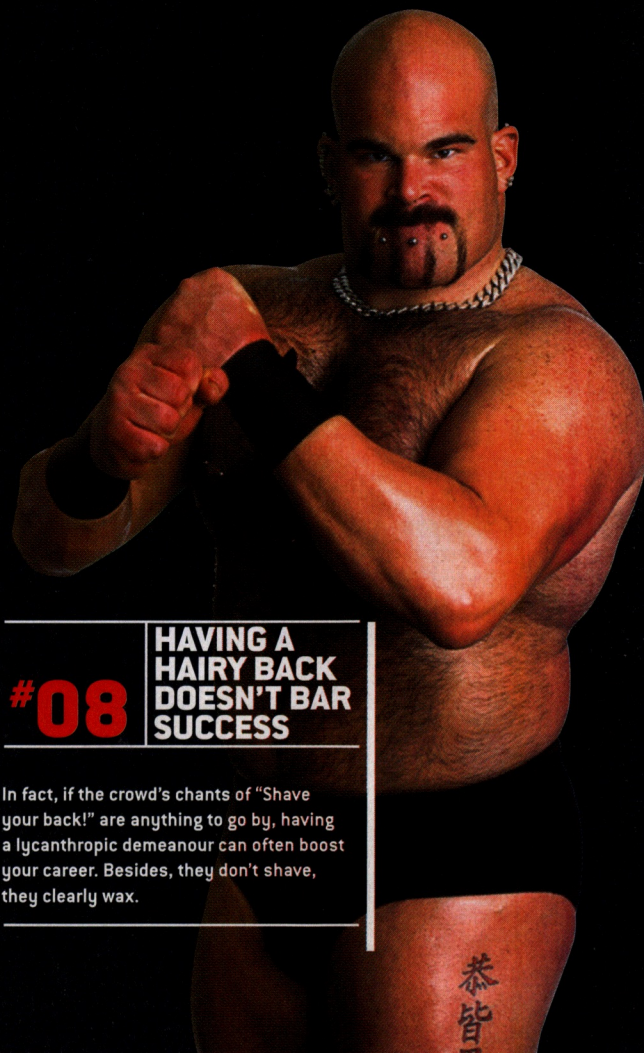
Perry Saturn once had some sort of love affair with a cleaning mop. Kurt Angle had to retrieve his Olympic medals from someone's underpants. Mark Henry fell in love with an 80-year-old woman who gave birth to a HAND. There are a million more examples. It has no shame. Result.

#12**JR & THE KING'S
COMMENTARY**

You thought Murray Walker was good? Imagine having two Murray Walkers, both fighting for control of the mic, shouting out phrases like "He's just been BROKEN IN HALF!" and "For the LOVE of GOD!" as loud as they possibly can. The King wears a crown, JR dresses a bit like a cowboy. And we've got Barry Davies. If you've ever been to a wrestling event you'll know just how flat it seems without The King screaming in horror at how much that ELBOW to the STERNUM must have hurt. Enjoy listening to men operating at the peak of their powers.

#08**HAVING A
HAIRY BACK
DOESN'T BAR
SUCCESS**

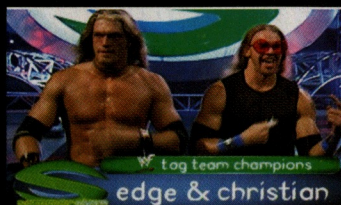
In fact, if the crowd's chants of "Shave your back!" are anything to go by, having a lycanthropic demeanour can often boost your career. Besides, they don't shave, they clearly wax.



#07 TABLES, LADDERS AND CHAIRS

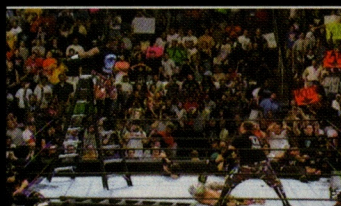
WWE used to be more exciting, more risky and more dangerous. This peaked with Summerslam 2000's Tables, Ladders and Chairs match, in which Edge & Christian, The Hardy Boyz and the Dudleys fought for the tag title in an astonishing TLC match. It was a fantastic fight, which came in the middle of the greatest tag-team period WWE ever had.

It has recently toned down the danger content, as it's worried stupid people like YOU might copy what you see on TV and break your spine on the breakfast bar. So it's YOUR FAULT WWE isn't as good as it used to be. Here's how good it once was.



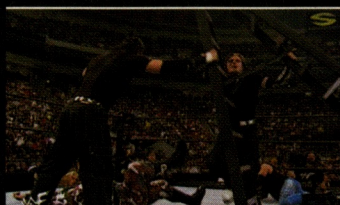
1 / COME, MIGHTY WARRIORS!

Two men, no bruises, about to fight in the most hardest of hardcore six-man tag matches ever witnessed in the world of wrestling.



4 / SUICIDE MISSION

D'Von, leaping from the top of a ladder, his head smashing the groin of the stricken man. Surely there's no comeback from that?



2 / BIG MAN DOWN

A tame start – Bubba Ray Dudley climbs the ladder to seize the dangling belts, only to be tipped off by the Hardys. It gets worse. By miles.



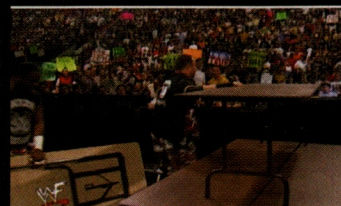
3 / DIVE BOMBAZ

Bubba gets his revenge (on someone else) by powering them down to the floor off the ladder top. Sore arses all round there.



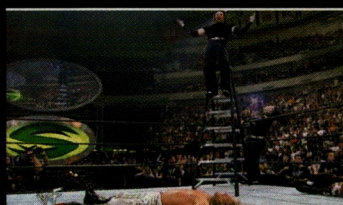
5 / D'VONI GET THE TABLES!

Now the Dudleys smash their man through a wooden table, surely to claim the title! Is it all over? Oh no, there's much badder to come.



6 / D'VONI GET SOME MORE TABLES!

Bubba and D'Von mysteriously start piling up four tables outside the ring. Someone's going to die if they're not very careful.



7 / FOR THE LOVE OF GOD!

Matt Hardy, up a ladder, about to jump on a man's vulnerable body. Holy Jesus, Matt is INSANE. This will end in death, or at the very least, snapping.



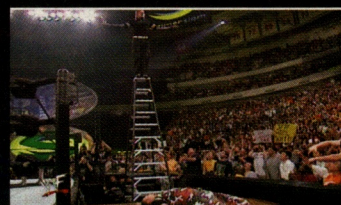
8 / AND OFF HE GOES

That, that moment right there, is why WWE is the greatest show on Earth. He's just jumped OFF A LADDER to land on a man. Madness.



9 / ROCK/HARD PLACE

Meanwhile, an unrecognisable Dudley has been sandwiched between the two sides of a step ladder – which gets jumped on. Ow!



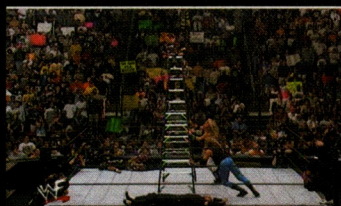
10 / SORRY MUM

Jeff Hardy, a big ladder, Bubba on the table below. And he's going to jump. Jeff Hardy is the greatest high-flying wrestler of all time.



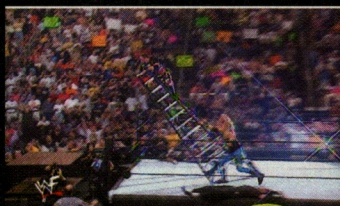
11 / MAN, DESTROYED

But Bubba evades the attack. Madman Jeff crashes onto the table to what must SURELY be his death. Carnage. Complete carnage.



12 / THE SHOW STOPPER

While Jeff slowly dies (SPOILER: He actually lived) Bubba's up the ladder in the ring trying to grab the championship belts.



13 / IMPENDING DOOM

But Edge and Christian don't want to give him that. They attempt PURE MURDER by shoving Bubba's ladder over!



14 / FACES OF DEATH

Bubba crashes through the four tables – SURELY to his death. A cameraman catches the moment to put on the internet. Incredible.

#06 SHANE MCMAHON'S BUMPS

Shane's not a wrestler, he's more like a stuntman. When he's in the ring you're guaranteed something huge. His role within WWE is pretty much to FALL OFF REALLY HIGH THINGS. Take a look at his best so far...



Summerslam 2000. Trying to escape the attacks of Steve 'Lethal Weapon' Blackman, Shane climbs the side of the arena. Bad idea.

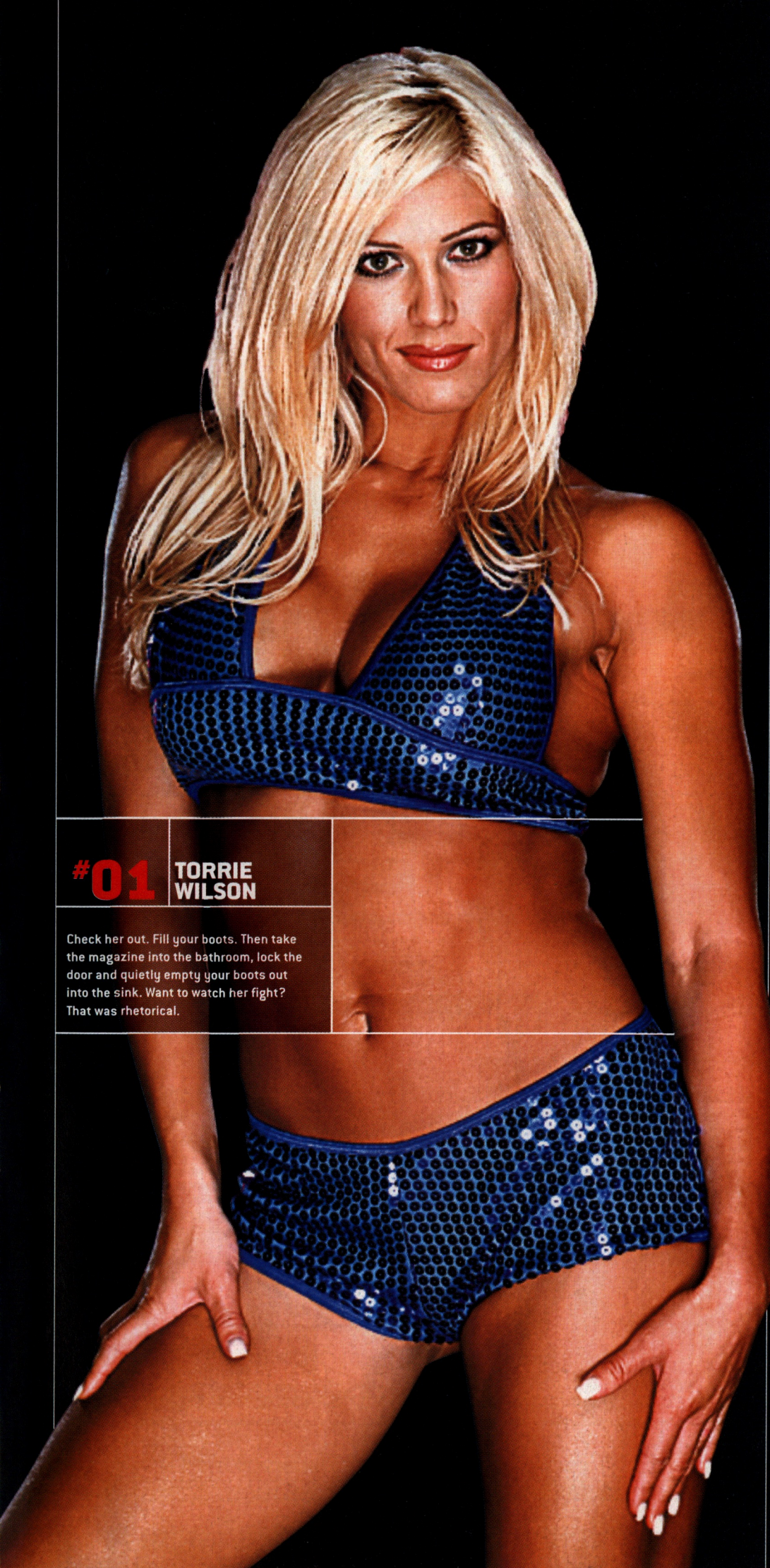
Shane just falls off. It's a 50-foot drop. He just plummets. The crowd goes a bit quiet – it looks like it may have been an accident.

But it wasn't. Ever the pro, Steve jumps down to cover Shane and take the win. And Shane carves out his place in WWE folklore.

#05 WWE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYER

Zach Gowen's life is all about triumph over adversity. The eager young wrestler represents the American spirit, while evil WWE boss Vince McMahon is September 11. Poor one-legged Zach is the Good, McMahon the Evil. It makes you cry how the leg-deficient young star takes on Vince's evil empire and wins. Even if you can't see the touching side of his struggle, it's a great chance to check out an amputee fighting on TV. Normally you can only see this kind of stuff in a small, grainy window from an internet download. See a man with one leg doing a drop kick. It's amazing, he's amazing. Zach is a lesson to us all and incredible to watch.





#01 TORRIE WILSON

Check her out. Fill your boots. Then take the magazine into the bathroom, lock the door and quietly empty your boots out into the sink. Want to watch her fight? That was rhetorical.



#04 THE CROWD

During boring matches, more fun is had examining the banners, t-shirts and faces of the fans. Yet more enjoyment is had trying to work out what it says on the ones censored for TV coverage. Kurt is a what? Surely that starts with a 'c'?

#03 THE PAY PER VIEWS

"Yes, Rock! You will get your revenge!" says Vince McMahon, "...at Wrestlemania in three weeks time!" he adds. The crowd boo, knowing they've been had and the best they'll see tonight is some meaningless four-man match where the title won't change hands because it'd mess up the story. The weekly shows are little more than promo trailers for the monthly subscription events, as WWE builds like a woman towards its monthly display of hormonal rage. Once a month UK WWE fans are required to subscribe to Sky Sports and stay up 'til 4:00am to watch the real reason the so-called sport exists. The best matches, biggest shocks and hardest hits are saved for these events – there's even a spot of nudity. It just keeps getting better and better.

#02 DUSTBINS

Funny, our dustbins don't tend to crumple so much. It's almost as if these are some kind of "special" dustbins that bend easier so they don't hurt so much when someone gets hit in the face with them. No, that can't be right, that would be like lying to the audience. It wouldn't do that, surely. When WWE does a Hardcore match, it's not just the bins that get taken out – we've seen sledgehammers, fire extinguishers, baseball bats and rolls of barbed wire used as weapons. Mick Foley even got thrown onto a floor covered with drawing pins once. It's not for the squeamish – it's for the sick and twisted. And the kids. The kids love that stuff. What is this world coming to?

THE APOCALYPSE WIPED OUT EVERYTHING.
EXCEPT GANGS, GUNS, CARS
— AND VENGEANCE.

*"RoadKill is a game with one
thing on its mind: carnage."*

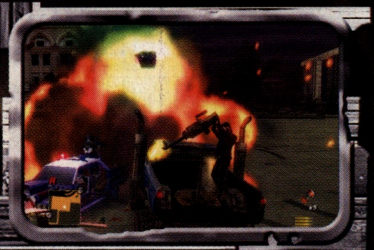
- Official Xbox Magazine

"A four wheel drive bloodbath."

- Play Magazine



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than 30 chaotic missions.



Control an arsenal of more than 30
vehicles and 17 potent weapons.



Take the ultimate challenge in
2-4 player deathmatch.

RoadKill

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Coming November 2003



PlayStation 2



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REVIEWS

ATTENTION! THIS SECTION CONTAINS EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO DECIDE WHAT TO BUY, AND WHAT TO LEAVE ALONE.



074 RATCHET AND CLANK
Cannon and Ball's Law states that the perfect double act consists of a good big 'un and a good little 'un.

PSW RATINGS

THE PSW SCORING SYSTEM IS DESIGNED TO MAKE YOUR BUYING DECISIONS SIMPLE. HERE'S HOW IT WORKS.

- > 10/10 ESSENTIAL
- > 9/10 BRILLIANT
- > 8/10 RECOMMENDED
- > 7/10 GREAT
- > 6/10 DECENT
- > 5/10 AVERAGE
- > 4/10 POOR
- > 3/10 VERY DISAPPOINTING
- > 2/10 BLOODY RUBBISH
- > 1/10 AVOID AT ALL COSTS

ADMIRE OUR LENGTH!

Behold the column headed "New Releases" to your immediate right. It's a big list. Why so big? So big because games companies store their internal spank bank of premium produce until the winter and go for the double money shot during November and December. But, some months, so skinny is this list of new PS2 games, we have to write lines and lines of flannel copy to cover over the embarrassing white expanse at the bottom of the page. Not so this time. For this month our column stretches, like a tendon of warm mozzarella, from the lower middle of the page right down to its abrupt end. Glorious. Glorious because this sudden surge of five-star releases has had a hugely positive effect on the make-up of the magazine, creating a competition for places that has allowed us to be more cut-throat than ever. Here's why: if a game wasn't as good as we'd anticipated it might be, we immediately halve the amount of space we had planned and award the extra pages to something better. It's a principle we like to call "Survival of the Bestest". If only every month was October/November 2003. Sure, it'd create a couple of minor problems for Earth's other six billion inhabitants but it'd make our jobs a hell of a lot easier. And that's the important thing.

/ **JON BROWN** FEATURES EDITOR



PSW GAME OF THE MONTH

The Game of the Month Award is what it is, the title that in PSW's opinion is the essential purchase of the month. Go and buy it now. Schnell!



PSW MUST BUY

Typically awarded to games that score 8/10 or above, representing one of the best in its genre. Simply, if you like this type of game, you 'must buy'. Clever eh?



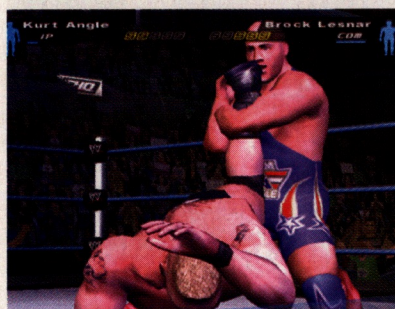
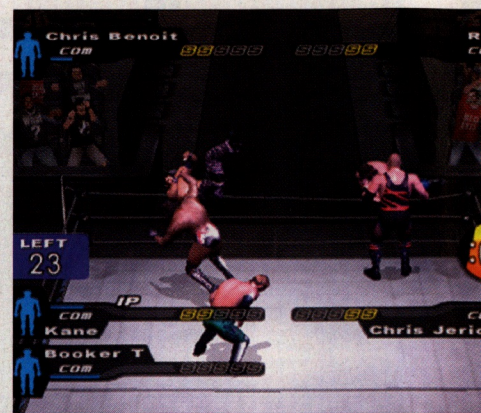
060 WWE SmackDown!



068 Pro Evolution Soccer 3

NEW RELEASES

- 060 WWE SMACKDOWN! HERE COMES...
- 068 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3
- 072 WORM 3D
- 073 TIME CRISIS 3
- 074 RATCHET & CLANK: LOCKED & LOADED
- 076 FORD RACING 2
- 078 NBA LIVE 2004
- 079 HUNTER: THE RECKONING WAYWARD
- 080 SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM
- 082 CLUB FOOTBALL
- 083 NBA JAM 2004
- 084 XIII
- 088 WRC3
- 092 SSX3
- 094 THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN
- 094 SUPER FARM
- 094 ROLLING
- 095 GALLOP RACER: AT THE RACES
- 095 SPLINTER CELL (PLATINUM)
- 095 HITMAN 2 (PLATINUM)



WWE SMACKDOWN! HERE COMES THE PAIN



> TYPE	FIGHTING
> PLAYERS	1-6
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	THQ
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	YUKE'S
> ONLINE	NO

WELCOME! WELCOME TO THE FOURTH annual PSW review of the new *SmackDown!* game. Once again, for your reading pleasure, we'll be tramping out the same old captions about men kissing, making childish references to screen captures where it looks like two girls could possibly be feeling each other's arses and breasts, and no-doubt eventually listing in a fairly serious tone all the new features this year's *SmackDown!* has that last year's *SmackDown!*

didn't, before coming to some sort of vague and ill-thought out conclusion as to whether this one is better than the last one.

In fact, if we printed last year's *SmackDown!* review with the names changed around a bit, most of you probably wouldn't notice. Except, and here's a shock only matched in size by Vince McMahon's testicular fortitude, this year's *SmackDown!* is incredibly different to the game which we awarded 9/10 a mere 12 months ago.

In short, it's better. In slightly less short, it's more accessible, it looks better, it's faster, and Goddammit it's about 20 times more fun.

Because *SmackDown!* creators Yuke's, has ditched the serious, look-how-realistic-it-all-is approach and gone for something more arcadey, something people with no knowledge of wrestling can enjoy and something we enjoy. That's great news. That's like scientists discovering that eating takeaway pizza protects



RIGHT ROYAL RUMBLE More men, same detail. Good work, PS2.



TRISH GOES DOWN And there's nothing we like more than that.



NO! NOT MY... HAIR The girls all have this head-slapping move.

MEET YOUR MATCH

THE TIP OF THE FIGHT-OPTION ICEBERG. WE COUNTED 23 MORE.



FIRST BLOOD

Brutal. Make your opponent bleed before he makes you bleed. If you've ever been to a pub in Nottingham on a Saturday night, you know what to expect. **HOW MUCH FUN?** A drunken roller-coaster ride.



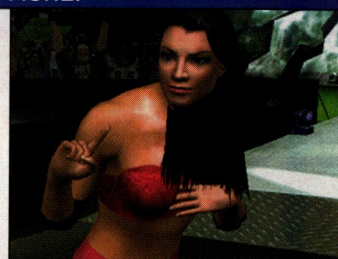
BRA AND PANTIES

Sorry mate, ladies only. Two girls, in skimpy clothes that are about to get skimpier. In fact, they're about to get non-existent. Press buttons fast to tear. **HOW MUCH FUN?** A play fight with the girlfriend that ends in sex.



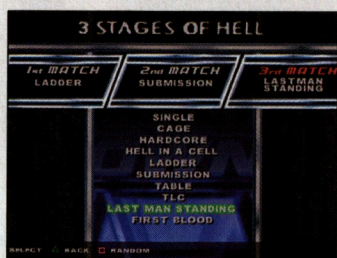
LADDER

The belt dangles in the middle of the ring. You beat your opponent until they can't stand, whip out the ladder, climb it and grab the belt to win it. Classic WWE. **HOW MUCH FUN?** Getting your car to go up to 100mph.



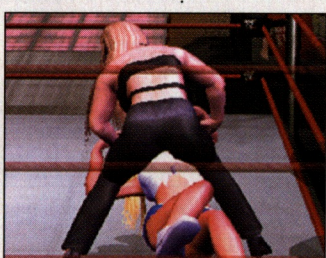
BRA AND PANTIES!

In which two ladies fight to rip each others' outer layers off until they're just in their sexy undies. You should see the tops stretch. It's comedy genius. **HOW MUCH FUN?** Jelly-wrestling with a coked-up girl group.



THREE STAGES OF HELL

A longer challenge, best suited to two-player challenges. Three match types, three fights, first to two wins, wins. More interesting, takes a while, fun. **HOW MUCH FUN?** Running down a steep hill really fast.



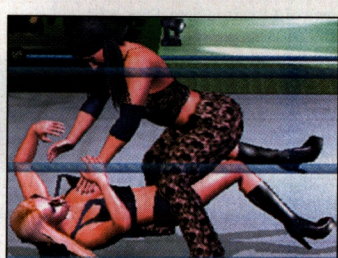
BRA AND PANTIES!!

A new match type, the Bra and Panties fights let you tear off the shirts and trousers and/or skirts of your lady opponent. They end up virtually nude. **HOW MUCH FUN?** A barrel of monkeys in zero gravity.



IRONMAN

A ten-minute challenge to score as many pins on your opponent as possible. Hurt them, make them dizzy, then fire in for a quick couple more. **HOW MUCH FUN?** Experimenting with grandma's medication.



BRA AND PANTIES!!!

The Bra and Panties match features two female wrestlers. Here, you beat your opponent until they are weak, then grab their clothes and attempt to rip them off. **HOW MUCH FUN?** A tickling match with a feathered octopus.

"YOU COULD TRAIN A DOG TO PLAY SMACKDOWN! IN A COUPLE OF HOURS, PROVIDING ITS PAWS WERE SMALL ENOUGH."

you from ever getting cancer and makes you live to be a thousand. This year, anyone, even someone who has no idea who The Rock is or what the thing he does with his elbow is, can pick up *Here Comes the Pain* and enjoy it.

They've simplified everything. Gone is the long, slightly bewildering array of options that once greeted you. In its place are five menu choices – Season, Create, Options, Credits and Exhibition – from where you get in and start the fighting. Better still, once you're in and playing, *Here Comes the Pain* feels twice as fast as last year's game, with more mobile characters skipping faster about the ring and firing off their moves in double time. Honestly, going back to



NEW METAL The so-called "steel" chair claims another victim.

last year's *SmackDown!* would be like swapping your trainers for a pair of tenth-century diving boots that have been encased in concrete and bolted onto railway sleepers. This is much faster. This is, therefore, much better.

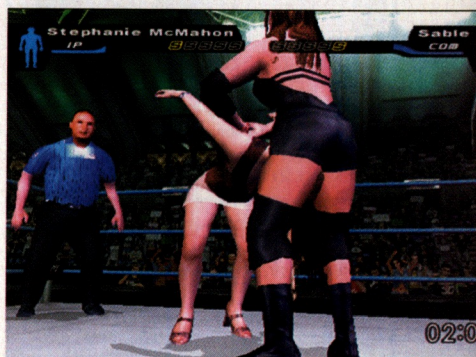
Wrestling games – last year's PlayStation2 *SmackDown!* included – usually boil down to two men lumbering slowly around each other in big circles, occasionally slapping each other. Not this one. The X button attacks, be it punches, kicks, stamps on the head or elbow drops. Press X and a direction button to do your special moves. That's how simple it is nowadays; repeat the above with the circle button to do throws and holds. It's so simple that the square button doesn't perform any attacks at all, and is saved for picking up chairs, ladders, sledge hammers and tables. You could train a dog to play *SmackDown!* in a couple of hours, providing its paws were small enough to let it press the individual buttons. We like it. People that like Tekken won't like it very much, but that's their fault for being all superior. They're missing out.

ONCE, THERE WAS A FULLY WAXED MAN

Also, the Season mode has been axed, torn apart, simplified and therefore made into something that's fun to play instead of the usual chore of finding something to do or randomly bumping into a man for a chat. The new Season mode now gives you a simple list of what to do. You have six choices. Move lets you chat with a wrestler or manager in a backstage locations. ShopZone is where you spend the dollars earned

by winning matches. Match is the match (told you it was simple). Attributes show you how many skill points you've earned through fighting, and there's a Profile for seeing who holds what title in the game and a Stable section for choosing which characters are Good and Bad. The Season is more straightforward, which lets you concentrate on the wrestling.

You're still playing through a year of TV shows, only this time each show contains only three matches. So there are less meaningless fights to skip through, and more action involving you. And the whole 'walking around' backstage sections of the last couple of PS2 *SmackDown!*s has also been hoofed out. Now, during a Season, you have a text list of five places you can visit between matches under the Move heading. If there's no-one in the car park, it tells you there's no-one in the damn car park, so there's no more



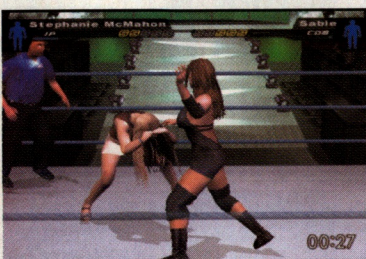
ALL OVER Steph shows off the moves she learned from HHH.

HOW UP TO DATE IS HERE COMES THE PAIN?

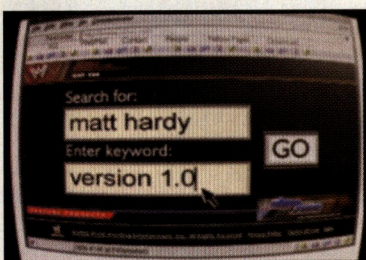
IT'S THE QUESTION THAT DOGS GAMES BASED ON REALITY. HOW NEW IS THE PAIN?



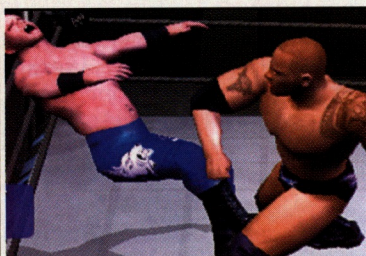
KANE UNMASKED Well, that's VERY good. This only happened, what, two months ago? Three months at the absolute tops, and the exposed face of Kane is in here. Good work
UP-TO-DATE RATING: 5/5



STEPH'S SIZE Is it just us, or does the General Manager gain a few pounds every week? *Here Comes the Pain* is nice to Steph, portraying a skinnier style from a good six months ago.
UP-TO-DATE RATING: 2/5



MATTITUDE Matt Hardy Version 1.0 is in, along with his glitchy web-style intro video. And his brother Jeff has been removed, as in the real world. Matt would approve.
UP-TO-DATE RATING: 4/5

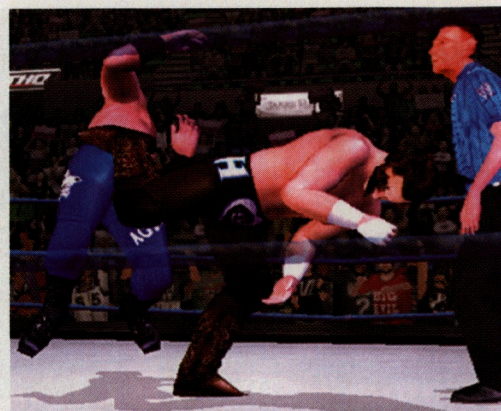


ROCK'S HAIR AND TATTOOS Now Rocky's gone all Hollywood and big time it's hard keeping up with his changing appearances. The newer 'Evil Rock' is here, short hair and tats correct.
UP-TO-DATE RATING: 5/5

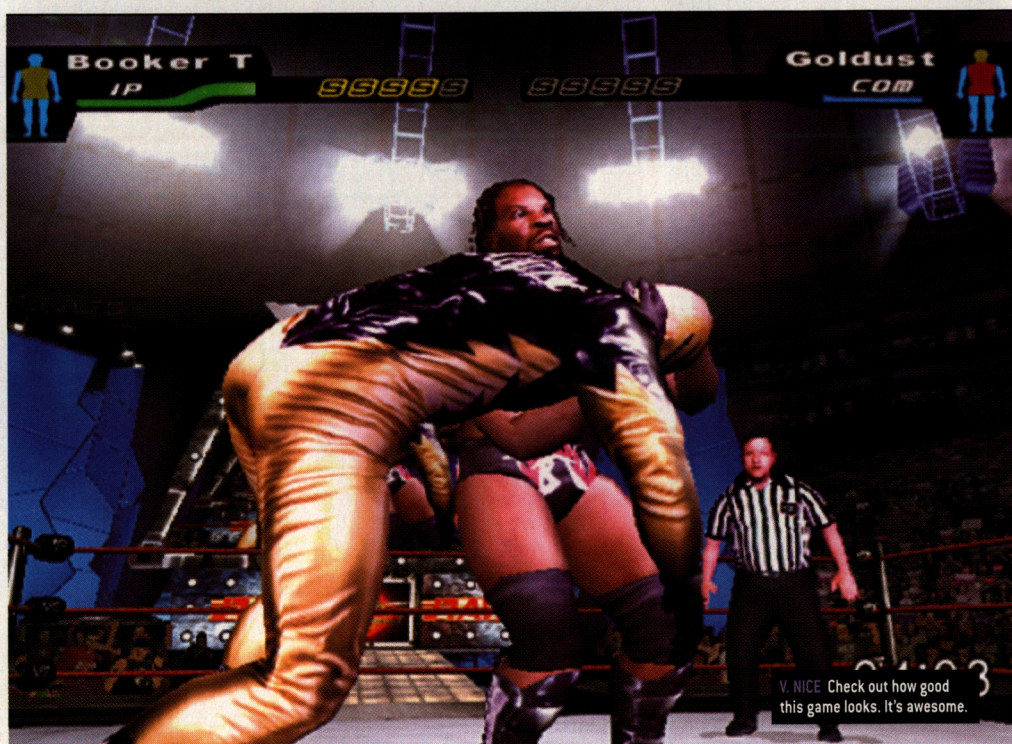
IN SUMMARY... If we assume the developer is being generous in pretending not to notice Steph's weight gain, then we can find no fault with the game's relevance. There's no Zach Gowen, but that's forgivable – programming a one-legged wrestler would take ages.



WHO'S THE BOSS? Vince is the boss. So be good and lose to him.



FACE BREAK KID Shawn's special move. A big kick. He's hard.



walking around empty car parks hoping to bump into someone for a bit of unnecessary backstage story action. It's a huge improvement, one that focuses *SmackDown!* on what it's all about – the sheer thrill of the wrestling.

You might, for example, see that Stephanie, lovely, curvy, out-sized sex bomb Stephanie, is in her General Manager's office. So pop in and ask for a title fight during week one of your very first Season in the WWE. We did that. And amazingly, Steph said yes, it's perfectly OK for us to challenge for the title in what was only our second-ever match. So out we went. Three minutes later we were crying on the floor in a pool of blood and perhaps a small amount of wee, as the true difficulty of some of *Here Comes the Pain's* Season matches was revealed.

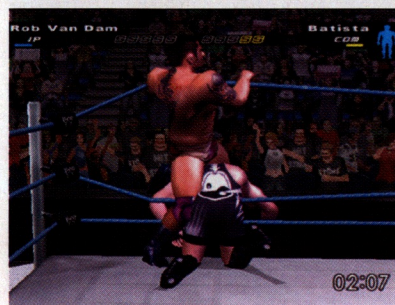
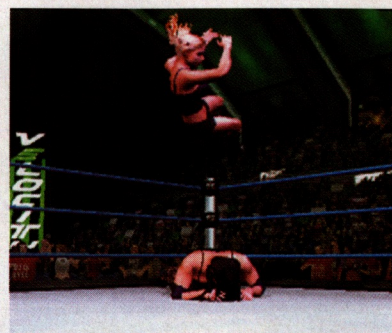
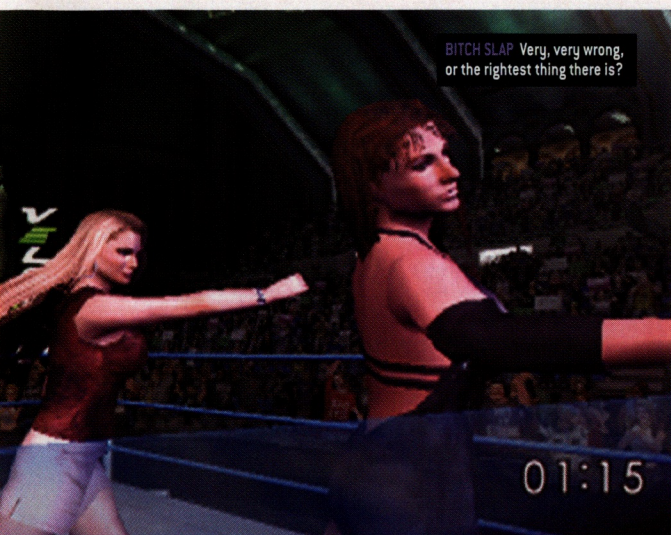
You need to start off small in Season mode. It's very hard, the fights extremely long and gruelling, with early matches earning you just over \$1,000 for a win – chicken feed when you need £10,000 to buy an alternate colour bikini for Torrie Wilson. There's a whole year to get through, 52 weeks of text-only introductions by JR and The King, backstage story highlights and branching alliance possibilities.

It's good. A bit simple, but for playing on your own it's a decent enough way to keep you ploughing through it and motivated to unlock

"THIS FRESH NEW SMACKDOWN! PLAYS MUCH BETTER THAN ANY WRESTLING GAME HAS BEFORE."

the extra stuff. Which, happily, is all listed for you. As ever, new wrestlers and arenas appear for selection in the one-off Exhibition matches once you've met them in the Season, so, for once, there's a genuine need to complete the whole story section if you want to see all that *Here Comes the Pain* contains.

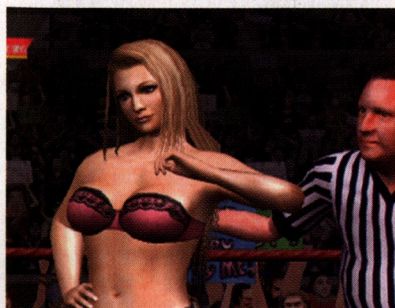
The money you win while Season-ing buys you yet more new stuff. New costumes, a choice of seven all-new move sets to use and allocate to the creatures you've formed in the Create a Wrestler feature, new arenas to fight in and even saucy pictures of the Divas (that's the female wrestlers to you, dad) to replace those of Triple H on the game's loading screens. In all, the Season mode is simpler and easier to cane than last year's, but with the needless walking around eradicated it's also a lot more immediate and, yes, fun. Sacrifice a child to the God of Games in thanks. The story is also amusing, concerning – at first – Big Show's autobiography. Then it moves on to encompass such joys as unexpected Birthday parties and slapping the



Undertaker in the face (you win an extra wrestling point for being brave if you slap him twice). We like the story. There are still plenty of moments where your actions clearly have no effect on the plot at all, with your choices receiving generic replies like "Yes. I thought you'd say that.", but overall the *Pain's* Season story is definitely an improvement over those we've seen before in *WWE* games.

EASIER DOES IT

This fresh new *SmackDown!* plays much better than any wrestling game has before. It's so very easy to pick up, play, pull off staggering moves and feel like your some kind of super games

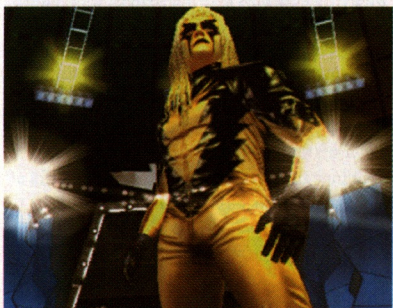


TOPLESS MODEL This is the sort of sick filth you can expect.

player from planet Games. You can hammer away at X and do pretty well, or go the grappling route by using circle and the direction pad to launch your grapples. So go in, press circle to grab your opponent, then press it again to throw. The two top triggers are your counter buttons – one to counter blows another for evading holds – with a press of them both at the right time stepping your fighter away from enemy *SmackDown!* specials. It's all so very easy, but like, er, draughts or chess or something, gives you huge scope for tactical play.

The L2 and R2 triggers are crucial to winning those harder title matches. L2 dodges blows, making your wrestler block, duck or step away

from a punch and set up a reply of his or her own. R2 does the same for throws, squirming your man's way out of holds and appearing behind your opponent to throw it back at them. Unlike most fighting games where countering has to be performed so fast it often comes down to sheer luck, *SmackDown!*, with its longer, slower grapples, gives you enough time to actually see what's happening and hit the right shoulder to escape. Cue some superb two-player snaking about, as you counter, your mate counters your counter, then you counter-counter his counter to counter back before he's countered you. For a game so seemingly simple, there's huge potential



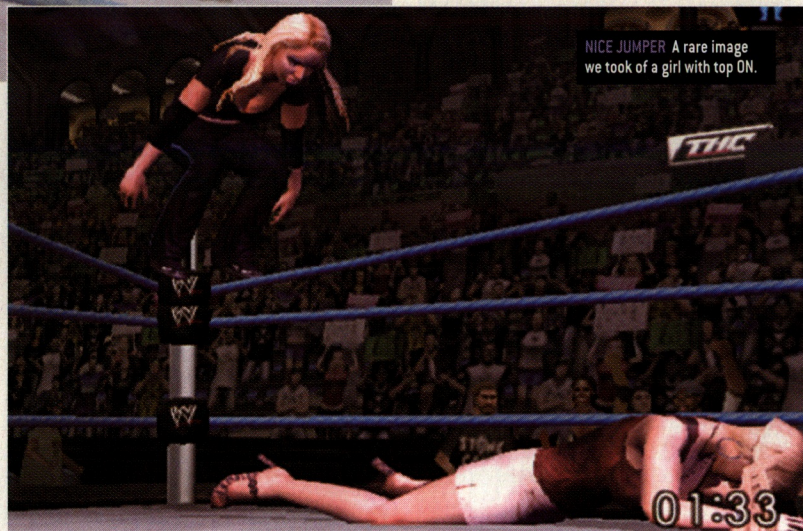
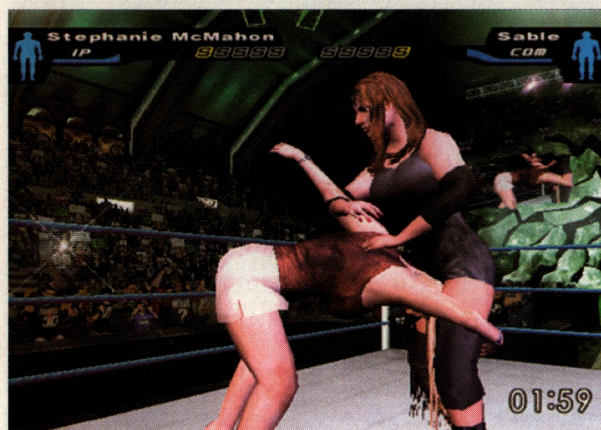
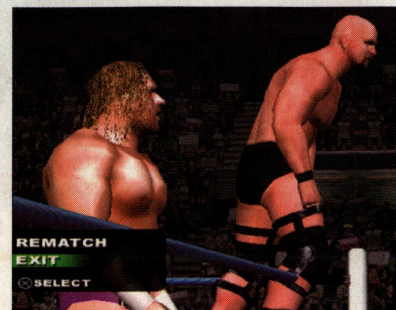
OLD-DUST This fat man also needs a bra. Don't want to see it.



BOOK END It's perfectly OK between consenting adults.



DO IT! Girls, forcing other girls to do stuff. How we love this.



NICE JUMPER A rare image we took of a girl with top ON.

for out-thinking your enemy via superior play.

The match types are also properly different this time, and are aided immensely by PS2-controlled opponents with actual brains. The enemy men of *SmackDown!*s old have all been pretty stupid, blundering about, not having much of a clue, not really doing what they're supposed to. In *Here Comes the Pain*, your foes have moved significantly up the evolutionary ladder. They know how to use chairs. They didn't before. We wrestled Tajiri, who we observed grabbing a chair from beneath the stage and climbing into the ring with it. But he didn't hit us with it – he put it on the floor, grabbed us, and DDT-ed our wrestler's face right into the "steel" chair for maximum damage. Clever boy.

Play as Rey Mysterio, for example, and your dazed enemy will predictably – but just like in real life – fall onto the ropes well away from the ring posts, which is suspiciously convenient seeing as Rey's special move requires his opponent to be in that exact position. That's good. That's your pay off, and when the new 3D, blurry, multi-angled *SmackDown!* special kicks in, it feels all the more satisfying. You've just done that thing off the telly. You are a wrestler. Congratulations. It's not just *SmackDown!* moves that warrant flash camera shots – climb the ropes and your jump attack is often enhanced

"YOUR FOES HAVE MOVED SIGNIFICANTLY UP THE EVOLUTIONARY LADDER. THEY KNOW HOW TO USE CHAIRS. THEY DIDN'T BEFORE."

by a bit of wonky-angled, blurry camera action. It's glam, it's impressive and it looks better than any other wrestling game – even *Raw 2* on Xbox, which, you may be pleased to know, is rubbish.

NAKEDER THAN EVER

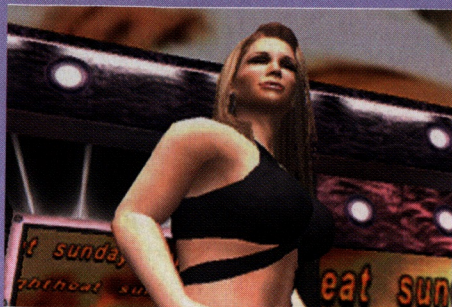
Our favourite by far – and it will be your favourite too – of the new match types, and we've been saving this one for the middle of the review where most people lose interest, is, with thanks once again to the God of Games, the Bra & Panties match. Without wanting to sound too much like SICK PERVERTS who only think about one thing and who are a danger to all women, this is a fantastic addition to *SmackDown!* we like a lot. Not just because it has girls getting their tops torn off (although that is about 95% of why) but also because it introduces new elements to the previously stale *WWE* playing style. It may well involve the morally dubious act of pretty much sexually assaulting women by ripping their clothes off, but the Bra & Panties matches enliven *SmackDown!* by a mile.

So there's you, right, beating up Torrie Wilson. She's weakened, lying on the floor, probably crying a bit and wondering what she did that was so wrong. Then, so the game tells you, "pressing Down and circle will attempt to rip off the Diva's clothes". So you yank her top off, pressing buttons quickly in an old-school style to bring the fabric-ripping metre down to the tear level. And off it comes. Is this wrong? The game only lets you play girl-on-girl matches in this borderline rape mode, so there's no worrying sight of seeing a huge man tearing a lady's trousers off. But even so, we momentarily paused to reflect on whether this is really the sort of thing the kids of today should be exposed to in video games. Then we see Torrie's lovely pink bra and decide that as long as we get to see bras and have fun we don't really care about anyone else. *SmackDown!* kicks ass!

So then you do it all again, repeating the beating, and hammering the button to roll your opponent over and pull off her shorts. It's quite obscene and borderline sexist. But only borderline. No girls are ever going to see it to complain, are they? So off the defeated and semi-naked lady runs, covering her body as she goes. Sadly her hair and arms pass through her shoulders, stomach and torso a bit as she moves them toward her body, but hey, you still

BEHOLD! THE BRA AND PANTIES MATCH!

IT'S THE BEST THING IN ANY GAME, EVER, BY APPROXIMATELY FIVE HUNDRED MILLION MILES. HERE'S HOW THE BRA AND PANTIES MATCHES WORK. MMM, BRAS. MMM, PANTIES. MMM, BRAS AND PANTIES.



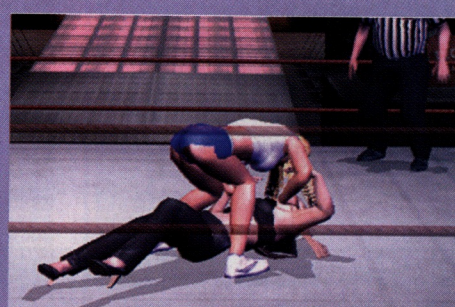
#01 HELLO LADY!

Well hello, sweetie. Welcome to Hell. If you don't mind us saying so, that top of yours looks a little bit flimsy to be fighting in. Let's hope nothing bad happens to it. Let's hope it doesn't GET TORN COMPLETELY OFF.



#02 SOFTEN HER UP

Right. Basic woman advice, thanks to the politically incorrect WWE agony uncle. If you want her to take her top off for you, you've got to slap her around a bit first. When she's weak you can rip her gear off easier.



#03 PRESS TO SAVE DIGNITY

When someone's got your top and is trying to tear it off, a mini gauge pops up where your energy bar is. Press buttons quickly to keep the bar down in the Escape zone to stay clothed and keep the bra covered.



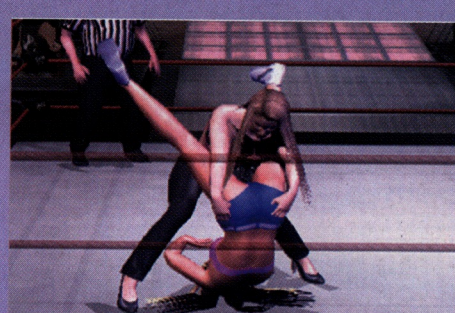
#04 OFF COMES THE TOP!

But get the gauge to Strip and your wrestling honey whips off the lass' top and waves it to the crowd. See the humiliation. And, more importantly, see the BRA. That's an ACTUAL BRA, like the ones women wear.



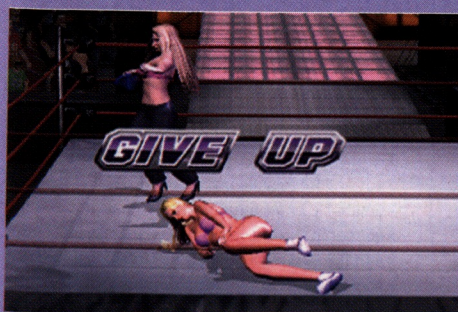
#05 NOW EVERYONE'S LOSING THEIR TOPS

So we got complacent. Maybe we got all excited at seeing a bra. Whatever, it somehow went wrong, and now Torrie's stripping our Sable down. See the give in that fabric. And also see a small amount of BRA.



#06 NOW GET THE PANTS!

Our de-topped Sable wants revenge in the form of pulling Torrie's shorts off to reveal her panties. Pressing down and circle makes your woman position herself over her enemy, lift her legs up and start tugging at her treads.



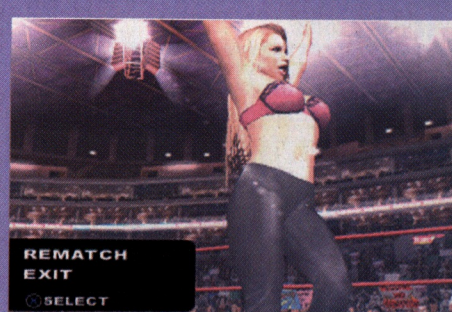
#07 PANTIES EXPOSED!

Wave the shorts, triumphantly, to the crowd, before taking them home and putting them on eBay, describing them a "pre-worn by a WWE Diva". Should go for at least £100. Look at that. A nearly naked woman.



#08 YES, YOU CAN RUN

The defeated top and bottomless loser scampers from the ring, protecting her modesty with her hands. If you're not feeling slightly dirty at this point you are an EVIL PERSON who's going to HELL. The poor girl.

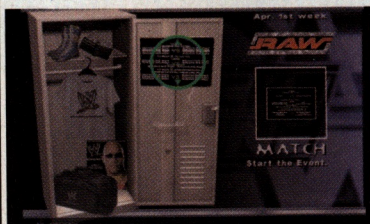


#09 CELEBRATE!

Celebrate – in your bra. That's a woman. In her bra. Result. That's a WOMAN'S BRA. See that? That's a BRA. Now you can say you've seen one, just don't mention it was only in a games magazine.

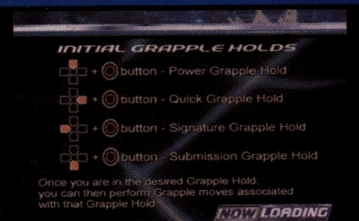
WHY THIS YEAR'S SMACKDOWN! IS BETTER THAN LAST YEAR'S...

HERE COMES THE PAIN DESTROYS ALL PREVIOUS WRESTLING GAMES. HERE'S WHY, IN A SORT OF LIST THING.



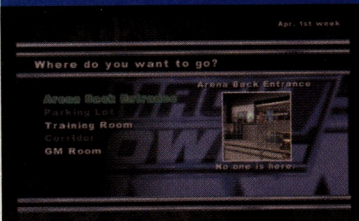
> SIMPLER SEASON MODE

Three matches on one screen, no messing. Here are your options, that one starts the match. It's that easy. It's a breath of fresh air.



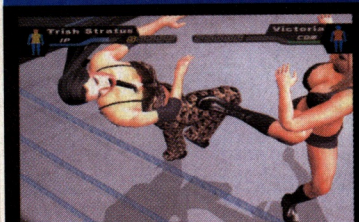
> SIMPLER CONTROLS

It's much easier – and faster – to play. Some won't like the simplification, but we do. We love it. And it's our magazine. So it's good.



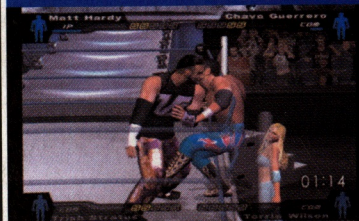
> LESS WANDERING ABOUT

See that list? That replaces the entire 3D wandering about bit of the last *SmackDown!*. It's way better. You know where to go. Result.



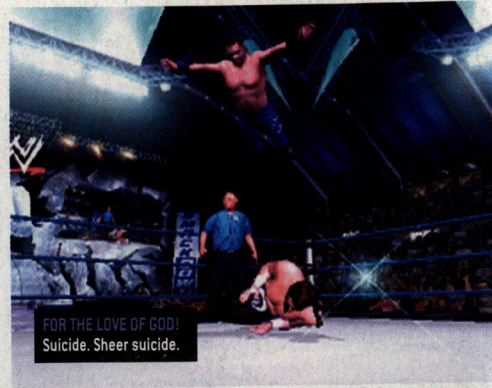
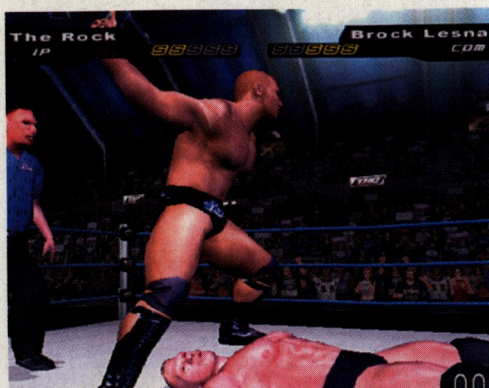
> SEXIER LADIES

Christ, check out Trish. That's pretty much all of her chest you can see there. Email us if you want this screenshot in a bigger size.



> MORE INTELLIGENT OPPONENTS

Enemies attack more, allies help more, the ref slaps you back if you accidentally DDT him onto a table. It's more alive, more fun.



"HER HAIR AND ARMS PASS THROUGH HER SHOULDERS, STOMACH AND TORSO A BIT AS SHE MOVES THEM TOWARD HER BODY."

get to see a bra. And that doesn't happen often.

The hair-through-shoulders thing is pretty bad though. The character likenesses are spot on and up to date – the inclusion of Eddie Guerrero's recent Cheat 2 Win angle illustrates the rough time cut-off point, and Kane had been de-masked – but the look is spoiled a little by a few minor stuff-going-through-stuff-it-shouldn't problems. How hard can it be to program hair to NOT go through shoulders? Surely it's one line of programming code, like, IF SHOULDERS = YES THEN MAKE HAIR = YES +1. Programmers, please, for next year can you please stop the girls' hair going into their bodies? Sable's sexy little lap dance taunt isn't quite as arousing when her hair's going in the back of her neck and sticking out the front of her chest.

But, we suppose, it's OK really. The poor PS2 is doing more than ever before, with the blood, ripping fabric, superbly detailed wrestler models and – really this time – a 3D crowd. Every year we get promised a 3D crowd, every year they get nearer to pulling it off, but always fail. Last year the front row was 3D. This year, the whole front standing area on the floor of the stadium is – a big improvement. Custom banners for each

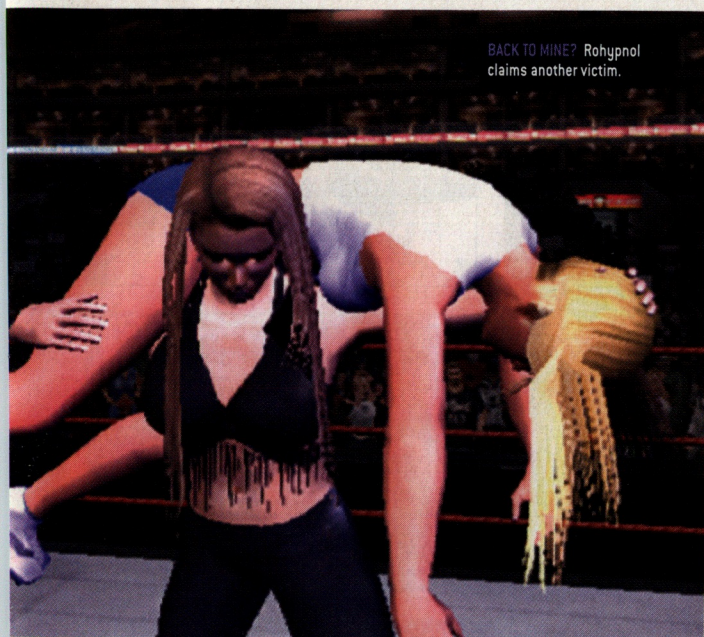
fighter are in too, with slogans familiar and new aimed at supporting or dissin' the guys in the ring. There's no speech, certainly not the wrestler voices we were promised (or at least thought we were – did we imagine that?) but visually, at least, the atmosphere is spot on.

Crowd cheering is great and, this may be a stupid mistake or the greatest joke yet seen in a video game, but the crowd chanting A-Train's "Shave your back!" taunt when Trish got her top ripped off certainly had us laughing. If they meant to do that, it's genius.

TEAM EFFORT

Tag matches are more fun than before too. The right stick is used to call in your out-of-ring partner, who fires off a few hits before the ref pulls him off and sends him out. In fact, the ref is a big star in *Here Comes the Pain*. Knock him out and he misses your pins, hit him and he'll hit you back, enter the ring with a chair and the do-gooder in the blue shirt will wrestle it from you and throw it away. Everyone under the PS2's control is better this time. Not just a bit, but significantly more intelligent, making neo-*SmackDown!* really come alive.

Play a bout with a manager and they help you too, rather than bumbling about randomly and getting stuck in a loop walking on the spot facing a wall like before. You want to manoeuvre your enemy into your corner, so your manager can slap them around a bit to soften them up.



Get yourself stuck in the other corner and the opposing manager tries to trip you up, and often twangs your head down on the ropes if you get too near. It's about a million times better than the idiot automatons that featured in last year's *SmackDown! game*.

And there's the blood. Frankly, it's a little disappointing, but still nice to see. First Blood

matches demand you make your opponent bleed to win. So you do. Cue a big red flash and a close-up shot of the bleeding man who's lost, sobbing and broken on the floor. So there's the blood. Red stuff appears in regular matches too, but it's polite – a raspberry jam smear on the face, nothing too offensive.

It all looks great, despite the old problem

of stuff going through stuff it shouldn't, as mentioned; arms going through chests, ropes scything through necks, etc. But, and here comes the conclusion you demand, *Here Comes the Pain* plays better than any other wrestling game, has the all crazy bra/panties action, leaks blood and contains everything that makes the *WWE* great – right down to the camp "Ooh!" the crowd shouts out when you slap someone really hard on the chest. Frankly, we love it.

WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain is the best wrestling game yet created, and, for the first time, a really enjoyable fighting game in its own right. You don't need to know anything about wrestling to love this, but if you do, you'll love it more than anything.

/ GARY CUTLACK



PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS	> DOWNERS
> Great-looking wrestlers	> Usual collision problems
> Super-fast play	> No Zach Gowen!
> Much better Season game	> Still no wrestler voices
> Bras. And. Panties.	> Blood could be better

GRAPHICS > Glorious, but stuff still goes through stuff **9**

SOUNDS > Not much talking, but great crowd chants **8**

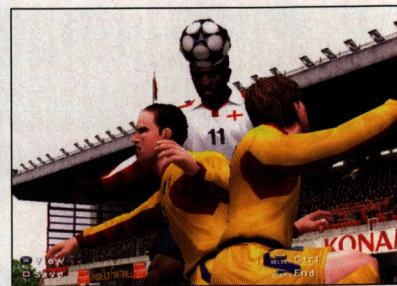
GAMEPLAY > The Season is that good, multiplayer's cool **10**

OVERALL SCORE
A great game, and not just if you know who Ric Flair is. Quick, punchy, funny and very violent, there's nothing not to love here. The best *SmackDown!* ever.

10



BROUGHT TO BOOK The referees are slightly less card-happy.



BUFFON THE BUFFOON Your keeper is more likely to drop serious clangers this time.



GINGER NOT Paul Scholes isn't blonde. He just isn't.



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

THE LONG-AWAITED THIRD INSTALMENT OF THE GREATEST FOOTBALL SERIES OF ALL TIME FINALLY KICKS OFF. BUT IS IT A BEAUTIFUL GAME OR AN UNSIGHTLY MESS?

> TYPE	FOOTBALL
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	KONAMI
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	KONAMI
> ONLINE	NO

DIARY OF A PES3 REVIEWER: ZERO HOURS,

one minute: Let's be straight on this from the outset. *Pro Evolution Soccer 3* was never going to be the "mammoth leap forward for the series" that the developers once promised. But that's only because the previous game came so close to banging its head on the ceiling of PlayStation2 that the scope for such a large-scale overhaul just wasn't there. In short, it couldn't really get that much better. So don't go expecting a tidal wave of innovations, for thou shall look mightily silly in your swimming trunks and goggles when the eventual trickle of new moves and options comes lapping around your ankles. Just bring wellies. Much like Ryan Giggs, a player who's been at the very top of his game for nigh on a decade now, the improvements that have been made over last two years aren't immediately apparent. Watch it for long enough, however, and you'll eventually see that *PES3* is now the complete player.

Zero hours, 32 minutes: Why is Paul Scholes

blonde? Could this be an act of charity towards the wee ginger bollock on Konami's behalf? Or is it a portent of more serious inaccuracies to come? Let's hope not. **One hour, 41 minutes:** Notice that the players interact with each other with more realism than before. Collisions are felt, mis-timed tackles prompt guilt-winces, tumbles look real and painful. In short, the teams actually look as though they're on the same pitch.

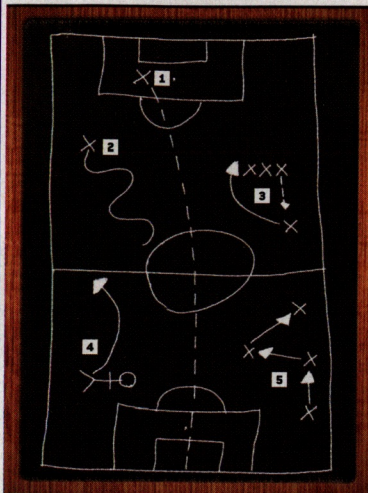
Two hours, 15 minutes: Set up the perfect formation for an England team and save it. **Two hours, 26 minutes:** Attempt to load the saved formation. Fail. **Two hours, 39 minutes:** Attempt again to load the saved formation. Fail again, and then succeed, but only after a serious consultation with the instruction manual. Arrive at the realisation that *PES3*, much like its forefathers, is an *idiot savant*, a fancy way of saying that it can do complicated stuff really easily, but finds simple things extremely difficult. Ever seen the movie *Rain Man*? Dustin Hoffman's

character can give you pi to 100 decimal points from memory, but doesn't know how to tie his shoelaces. *PES3* is much the same. It can replicate the physics of two footballers clashing like conkers in midair with astonishing realism, yet can't find an easy way to allow you to store formations for future use. The Master League is another example: conducting your transfers in that is a painfully tricky business. Sadly that's all part of the deal. This, it seems, is the price you pay when you work with a genius.

Four hours, 50 minutes: Notice a banner in the crowd reading, "Ave it." Think to self, "How scabby." **Four hours, 59 minutes:** Having been dumped out of the World Cup at the semi-final stage on penalties, decide to pay a visit to the training ground. Those who follow should prepare for a thorough re-education. Lesson One: dribbling. Where *PES2* had one dribble speed – either you ran fast or you didn't – *PES3* has three. In addition to flat-out sprinting (by holding R1, as

THE GAME PLAN

PRO EVOLUTION 3'S NEW FEATURES IN FULL. WELL, FIVE OF THE BEST ANYWAY....



1. GOALKEEPERS > One-nil down with 30 seconds to go? Win yourself a corner and your goalkeeper will automatically sprint the length of the field in an effort to try and bag you an equaliser. Sweet when it works. Really quite shit when it doesn't.

2. DRIBBLING > As well as being able to pop the old 360° spin (see panel on following page for more on that), you also have more control over shimmies and step-overs. We hear rumours of a nutmeg, but have yet to see it.

3. SET PIECES > Scoring directly from free kicks is considerably easier now you can add more dip and bend. Those defending free kicks can either make the wall jump or order players to charge at the taker in a bid to put him off.

4. PLAY ON > See that stick man? He's been fouled midway, releasing a Hollywood through-ball (thanks Big Ron) to a teammate. Thankfully the referee has the good sense to allow you to play on.

5. ONE-TOUCH PASSING > Improvements made to first-time passing allow you to play a faster, more direct game. The potential for showing off is almost infinite.



VOLLEY BALL. Hit it first time to catch the keeper unawares.



CARLOS THE TACKLER. He's never been the best defender in the world.



before), you are now able to jog at slightly lower speed, affording you greater control of the ball. Find yourself in a seriously tight spot and you can also waddle along in a slow dribble. What's the point in the slow dribble? [Shrugs]. More new stuff: the number of feints and step-overs has been increased, players can jump tackles, the crossing has been improved, scoring directly from freekicks is plenty easier (you have the option of either firing in a hard and straight shot or curling in a soft and bendy one) and defensive walls can be made to jump.

THE PASS MASTERS

Far more significant than any of this is the fact that *PES3* players are more comfortable passing first time. Sounds like a relatively minor thing but, truly, it isn't. What it means is that it's now possible to move the ball around more quickly to link together solid chains of one-touch passes that can tie up defenders

"SOLID CHAINS OF ONE-TOUCH PASSES CAN TIE UP DEFENDERS AND LEAVE THEM BREATHLESS AND CONFUSED."

and leave them breathless and confused.

Five hours, four minutes: Beat Poland 3-0.

Notice that we're getting pretty good at *PES3*. And that's because instead of attempting to play the ball through crowded midfields as we would've done last time around, we're instead launching long passes, running at defenders and, significantly, shooting on the volley. Whereas in *PES2* players needed to control the ball before having a dig, they can now strike a moving ball accurately and with power. The fact that attackers are more instinctive, more likely to react automatically when the ball falls to them, also helps. Therein lies the key to succeeding in *PES3*: always make sure that you have midfield

players running in on the follow-up whenever anyone shoots.

Five hours, 41 minutes: Three up against Finland, decide to break out the cigars and begin showboating. Notice that it's easier to do this than it was in the previous game. As Emile Heskey lashes in a fourth, conclude that the biggest difference between *PES2* and *PES3* is that this time around you feel far more in control of your players. **Five hours, 45 minutes:** Wait a second. Did Emile Heskey really just lash in a fourth? Why on earth have they made him so good this time around? [Shrugs].

Six hours, 43 minutes: Enter the *PES* Shop for the first time. With 500 points in the bank (points are handed out for winning matches in any of the modes) we have the option of either buying a handful of new players – Paul Ince for 150 points? No thank you – or an equally pointless ball effect that apparently changes the look of the replays. Save another 500 and we can

SPIN DOCTOR

A FRAME-BY-FRAME LOOK AT *PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3*'S MOST IMPRESSIVE NEW TRICK....



STEP ONE > Find a suitably skilful player – a Brazilian should do it – and jog gracefully into an open expanse of field.



STEP TWO > Rotate the right analogue stick through 360 degrees in a brisk manner. Prepare to look cool.



STEP THREE > Look on with glee as your Brazilian reaches the halfway point in his journey around the ball.



STEP FOUR > Almost done. Just another 90 degrees to go. Why are you doing this again? Oh yeah, because you want to look good.



STEP FIVE > To complete the trick, simply gather the ball and sprint into space while trying not to fall over. Nice work.

REPLAY THE FIELD Anytime you fancy a replay, just do it. We've waited a long time for this.



SPOT THE BALL. Penalties still have a slightly random element.



GOLDEN EMILE. Just get the ball to Heskey. He's great.

unlock double-speed matches. Hmm.

Eight hours, 15 minutes: Crawl back into the PES Shop with 1,000 points burning holes in our pockets, glowing welts of dead skin on our thumbs. Unlock the double-speed matches, try it for 30 seconds, then give up. Too bloody fast. What did we expect? (Shrugs).

Eight hours, 17 minutes: Decide to start a Master League. **Nine hours, 40 minutes:** Come to the conclusion that there are few things in all of life more satisfying than building up a team in PES3's Master League. With only unsophisticated Sunday league hoofers at your disposal, the kind who spend half-time on the crapper, smoking pipes while reading *Fisherman's World*, you're forced to go against everything you believe in in search of those much-needed points. Which means playing the long ball and kicking lumps out of players far more skilful than your own. Sounds boring, but it isn't. There's a lot to be said for playing cynical, negative, uncreative football. For one, it makes you feel more like a real manager, giving you an insight into how it must be for lower-division bosses who have to mend and make do with featherweight defenders, shitty midfielders and skin-and-bone attackers.

And for two, it makes you appreciate the true value of a goal. In *FIFA*, hyperinflation means that goals are worth less than a gypsy's trainers. As you score the tenth 30-yard screamer in that half, you emit an almost inaudible sigh of indifference. In *PES3*, as you scramble home a truly crappy goal in the ninetieth minute to round off yet another wonderfully undeserved victory, you bellow with a bestial ferocity that causes neighbours to look up from newspapers.

Nine hours, 58 minutes: Cave in and finally concede that Konami has at long last made a decent fist of the commentary. The real difference is that now Trevor Brooking and Peter Brackley refer back to key incidents throughout the match, perhaps reflecting some 50 minutes later on a controversial equaliser that changed the complexion of the game early on. It's a minor thing, but it certainly adds to the drama of the individual matches. Granted it's not perfect; at times the pair can be more fickle than Manchester United supporters – one minute you're playing wonderful attacking football, the next you're lucky to still be in the game – but only a fool would deny that the developer has



TURKEY SHOOT Ortega slides one past Rustu. The faces are incredibly lifelike.



DO RON RON RON Ronaldo mops up from close range.



FRENCH CLASS As before, Zidane is the most influential player in the game.



CROWD CONTROL Play badly and the fans won't come.



BACK-STICK MEN Defenders cover the posts on corners.

"THE DONKEYS AT YOUR DISPOSAL ARE THE KIND WHO SPEND HALF-TIME ON THE CRAPPER READING *FISHERMAN'S WORLD*."

finally got the two commentators marching in the right direction.

Ten hours, 23 minutes: Realise that for the first time in the history of *Pro Evolution*, the atmosphere of domestic football has been perfectly captured. Epiphany comes during game between Tottenham Hotspur and Fulham played on a muddy pitch in pissing rain to a low four-figure crowd. The big matches – World Cup finals and the like – are still just as heated and as atmospheric as ever. It's just that now the game can replicate the look and feel of everything from a meaningless league match to a major international showpiece.

12 hours, 10 minutes: Call a brief halt to the Master League in order to bathe and reflect. While lying in the bath surrounded by scented candles and whale sounds, conclude that Konami hasn't quite done all it could to improve *PES3*'s Career mode. Though incredibly rewarding

in the long-term, the management side of the Master League is still weak. Signing players is far more of an ordeal than it needs to be and the decision to use points and not pounds to calculate the value of a player serves as a constant (and massively unnecessary) reminder that everything you're doing is just make-believe. Hate to say it, but *PES3* could learn plenty from *FIFA 2004* in this regard. The only real improvements here – ie, developing youth players is more hands-on this time around – are largely irrelevant.

15 hours, 34 minutes: Stop playing *PES3* and start thinking about the review. Make note to self to try to build up the tension – will it be a nine out of ten or a ten out of ten?

15 hours, 35 minutes: Realise that you've already seen the score in the bottom right hand corner. A nine it is then. As much as we love it – and truly we do – *PES3* is nonetheless yards short of greatness. An Online mode, a fully refurbished Master League, an official licence and an end to all this Oranges nonsense (sorry to report that many player names are as ridiculous as ever) and *PES3*'s final score could've been up into the double figures. As it

stand it's still comfortably top of the league in terms of PlayStation2 football titles, but we're nonetheless nagged by the feeling that so much more could've been achieved with just a little more application. That said, your *PSW* homework remains to go out and buy yourself a copy right away. Because we guarantee that you will love *PES3*, it's just that you might have to work a little harder at your relationship with the game that you would've liked.

/ JON BROWN

PSW VERDICT		
> UPPEERS > Deeper and more rewarding > Graphics are top drawer > Master League is better > Fast and demanding	> DOWNERS > Master League not perfect > CPU teams overly defensive > Player names still phoney > Online would've been nice	
GRAPHICS > An outstanding level of detail throughout		9
SOUNDS > Decent commentary, weak crowd effects		8
GAMEPLAY > Good as it ever was. And a little bit better		9
OVERALL SCORE A work of art tarnished by a handful of lazy brushstrokes. Two billion light years ahead of FIFA 2004. Still, you never get the feeling that Pro Evolution Soccer 3 is ever straining itself.		9



WORMS 3D

YOU KNOW HOW 3D TETRIS AND 3D LEMMINGS AND DRAGON'S LAIR 3D DIDN'T WORK? WELLLL...



> TYPE	STRATEGY
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	SEGA
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	TEAM 17
> ONLINE	NO

IGNORE THE CUTESY-SICK-MAKING GRAPHICS.

Worms 3D isn't a platform game. It's not even a smooth, exhilarating ride like most PlayStation2 titles are these days. It's not meant to be. Instead, it's an arena for a very skilled and exacting turn-based multiplayer battle that, potentially, could have shit on the *Fire Warriors* and *TimeSplitters 2*s of this world from a great height. You have access to dozens of weapons, special attacks and ways to travel. You then have a set number of seconds to move one of your worms and try to take one shot at the opposition's slimy ones. Then it's their turn to attempt to take you out – and so on.

If you ever played one of the original 2D *Worms* games, this will all sound very familiar. Hell, even the weapons, voices and tactics are just as you remember them. What's different is that now it's played out on a properly 3D destructible landscape, which makes everything more difficult by a factor of, well, three. Judging distances for aiming is now harder, as the wind blows side to side as well as forwards and backwards. The levels look pretty from a distance, and babyishly basic up close. Huge, tangled structures separate you and your enemies, but the game camera is hopelessly incompetent at capturing the action. You have the choice of a close-up third-person view, or

a bird's eye view that can't be zoomed in. The result? You can't fire the complex (default) bazooka weapon properly unless you have either a) a degree in ballistics, or b) steadier hands than the Statue of Liberty.

There's a single-player game in here too, which is quite deep and challenging, but it's ever so slightly mission-based and only serves to highlight *Worms 3D*'s control problems further still. Without another human around to balance out your incompetence, things can get hairy. One wrong button press and you've messed things up completely. Your worms inch along merrily, then drop into the water you couldn't see coming because of the camera position. No sooner have you recovered from that catastrophe than your worms have jumped into oblivion because you double tapped the button when you didn't mean to. You're not so much controlling your characters as you are issuing orders.

Even when you get into it, it's hard to really like *Worms 3D*. So many of the elements that used to make us laugh have ended up becoming very annoying in the intervening years. Those helium voices? There are now loads of different voice groups, even more than before, but it's all still made up of sub-Monty Python humour and early 90s TV references. Although each worm has a different name, no efforts been made

to change their generically wormy appearance. Fine for three pixels on your mate's old Commodore Amiga, not so fine when you're dealing with a battlefield of ten identical friends and foes.

It's obvious that developer Team 17 had a lot of fun making this, but it's really only a 3D update of an old game rather than a proper re-invention. Oldsters might love it – then again, they might rebel and want the original like babies deprived of their ickle dummy. So we're giving it a somewhat dismissive five out of ten. Because you can't please all of the people all of the time.

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

> UPBERS	> DOWNERS
> It's <i>Worms</i> ! You know?	> 3D means 3 times tougher
> All those old weapons	> Bewildering to newbies
> Still engrossing	> Cameras fairly stink
> Multiplayer's neat	> STOP THE VOICES. NOW
GRAPHICS > Smooth but only because they're basic	5
SOUNDS > Oh, hahaha, they talk like pirates	4
GAMEPLAY > Hard at first. Then still hard.	6
OVERALL SCORE	5
We predict that nobody can be bothered to spend the time on this well-intentioned but pretty much futile update. We won't be losing much sleep over this.	



TIME CRISIS 3

PISTOLS AT TEN PACES, GRENADE LAUNCHERS AT FIFTEEN METRES AND SHOTGUNS AT POINT BLANK RANGE. WELCOME TO THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF *TIME CRISIS*.

> TYPE	SHOOTING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	OCTOBER
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	NAMCO
> ONLINE	NO

GUNS EH? HORRIBLE THINGS IN PRINCIPLE,

but there's something about them that makes even the most pacifistic of us love 'em anyway. We mean, come on. Who hasn't gone to the power-tool department of their local DIY store, picked up the biggest electric drill on display and then pretended it was some kind of souped-up AK-47? And isn't "Uzi 9mm" the sexiest phrase (after "Miss Gellar's waiting in the bedroom for you sir") ever? Which is why it's almost impossible not to love the *Time Crisis* games. And take it from us, *Time Crisis 3* is fan-fricking-tastic. It's not just a very good lightgun game; it's just about the best lightgun game ever released on any console, period.

And the catch is...? Well it is a lightgun game, right, which means it's kind of on the shallow side. But put your gaming class snobbery aside for a minute and *Time Crisis 3* really is the purest slice of adrenalin-charged gaming we've seen in ages. If you've played the arcade version of *Time Crisis 3*, or any of the *Time Crisis* games for that matter, you'll know what to expect. This is *Time Crisis* with all the stops pulled out. There's a beach landing full of armed guards arriving by parachute, a close-quarters gun fight through a burning library (complete with some quality fire effects), a frenzied escape from a sinking ship, a roof-top battle across a Mediterranean village and we've not even mentioned the obligatory train-based sequence.

And then there's the revolutionary "all-new" bit; the multiple weapon angle that allows you to switch between pistol, machinegun, shotgun and grenade launcher during moments when you're not actively putting the bad guys down. OK, so it doesn't change the flow of the gameplay all that much, but it does add a smidgen of strategy, forcing you to pick the most appropriate weapon for the task in hand. As endlessly fun as it all is though – and rarely have we had a game in the office garner so much attention – *Time Crisis 3* is still an arcade game at heart and, as such, not overly long. Half an hour is all it'll take for

an experienced player to get from start to finish. That said, there's the two-player mode that can be played split screen or, more suitably, with two PS2s linked up, as well as tweaking options that allow you to alter the game each time you play. There's even a PS2 exclusive Rescue mode that casts you as a new female character. Lovely.

So, despite the fact that it's short, repetitive and you'll need to fork out for two machines, two tellies, two copies of the game, two lightguns and a friend to get the most out of it, *Time Crisis 3* is a no arguments, dyed-in-the-wool eight out of ten game. Because it's just that good.

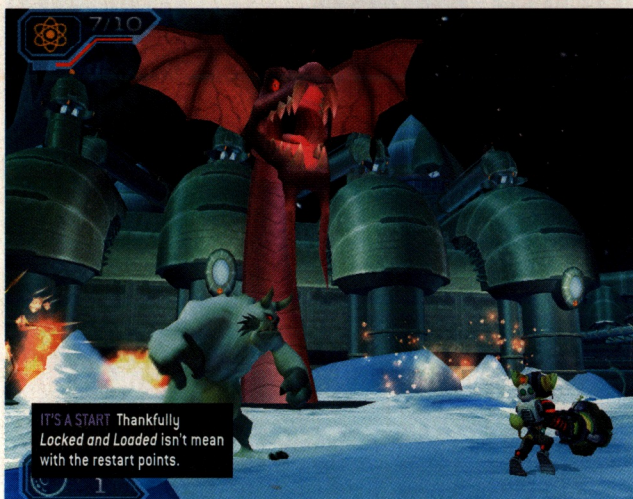
/ MARK ROBINS



HAVING A BLAST Try not to stand in the way of bullets. Duh.

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS		> DOWNERS
> Crack cocaine addictive		> Short
> Looks and sounds great		> Repetitive
> Brilliant level design		> One-dimensional
> Great PS2 extras		> But so is Pammy Anderson
GRAPHICS	> Spot-on arcade conversion	8
SOUNDS	> Great soundtrack, good gun blasts	8
GAMEPLAY	> You'll grin like a cheshire cat on pills	9
OVERALL SCORE		8
Admittedly short and shallow, but packed with extras and the sort of addictive gameplay that only the amusement arcade can bring. You can't fail to love this inspired piece of programming.		



RATCHET AND CLANK: LOCKED AND LOADED



SICK OF BEING MISTAKEN FOR JAK AND DAXTER, EVERYBODY'S SECOND FAVOURITE PLAYSTATION2 DOUBLE ACT GET SERIOUS.

> TYPE	PLATFORM
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	INSOMNIAC GAMES
> ONLINE	NO

IF YOU DON'T LIKE LOCKED AND LOADED

then you don't like video games. It's as simple as that, as simple as AB, which is even simpler than ABC, which in itself is considerably simpler than the entire alphabet. You jump around, you smash giant robotic spiders into a thick mashy shit with an oversized wrench, you shoot wooden boxes and collect the power-ups contained therein. Nothing fancy, just a traditional platform game constructed from old school ideas and explosions that make you go "Ooooooooooh" like a child at a firework display. Like we say, if this doesn't push your buttons then either your joypad isn't plugged in or you don't like games. And if you don't like games, then either you're a loser or you're a girl. And if you're a girl, could you please write in and tell us what it's like to be able to touch them whenever you want? Unmetered access. The Holy Grail. We've always wondered.

Locked and Loaded is a game with an infectious energy. Within the first half hour of play you've visited three hugely different game worlds – first a huge jet-propelled base, then a Swindon-esque swampland, then a Tokyo-style future-opolis – collected six different weapons,

played several of the mini games and threaded your way through a densely woven asteroid field. It's a game in perpetual motion, afraid that if it so much as stands still a huge stench cloud of Other Stuff will quickly descend to lead you away to the dark continent of washing up, homework and self-abuse. This is why we like it. Because there's always something going on to make us forget how paper thin our lives are.

BLENDED TO PERFECTION

Before we go any further, let's take a closer look



LOCKED IN Expect a hostile reception everywhere you go.

at that near-perfect blend of playing styles. The bulk of the game, as with *Ratchet* the first, has you running, jumping and hitting. By rights this should be less interesting than the contents of your grandmother's handbag (mint humbug, bingo marker, meat coupon, lilac hankie). And indeed it would be were it not for both the weapons and the explosions. The guns are long and supremely powerful, gobbing out endless streams of multi-coloured agony until you're the only thing in the room that hasn't been reduced to a smoking heap. It's a very simple pleasure,



SHELL HOCK Ammo can be bought from vending machines.



I'M ALL RIGHT, JAK We do prefer Jak II: Renegade, but there's not a lot in it.



GUN CONTROL The more you use your guns, the more powerful they become.



GLADIATOR, READY! Beat bosses for extra cash and equipment.

one that PSW will never tire of.

Fight your way through the end of the level, complete the core objectives and the jumping and running is replaced by flying and shooting, for often Ratchet must pilot his own course from one game world to the next, dog-fighting as many enemy ships as your PS2 can hold in its microscopic electronic brain without going cross-eyed and collapsing. In essence, *Locked and Loaded* is retro gaming – the ideas at work hark from the days when the twin titans Beadle and

“THE IDEAS AT WORK HERE HAVE BEEN IN PLAY SINCE THE TWIN TITANS BEADLE AND EDMONDS RULED OVER ALL OF TV LAND.”

Edmonds ruled over all of TV Land like blow-dried, bearded ogres – yet it still feels fresh, an original recipe cooked up from old ingredients.

There's nothing new about the two remaining mini-games either – the first has you entering a gladiatorial arena to see if you can outlast a seemingly endless stream of villains for cash, the second has you racing hoverbikes – yet both succeed in trapping your interest under a large glass jar and keeping it there until it can manage to kick a hole in the side and sneak out.

The bad news wears a familiar face; we had problems with game camera. It is possible to change the view manually with the right analogue stick, but often you're too busy to do so and lose health as a result. The only other slight snag is that the script isn't nearly as funny as it likes to think it is.

JAKKED OFF

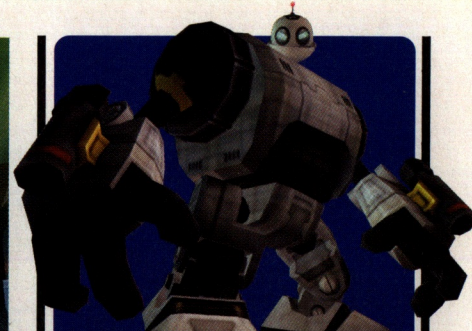
The ultimate point of reference here has to be *Jak II: Renegade*, close cousin and bitter rival, and as much as we like *Locked and Loaded*, we'll always go elsewhere when forced to choose between the two. Because as charming as this is, it's less of a step forward than *Jak II*, a title that lumbers forth from the womb, lays down a heaving city and shouts, “Roam where you like.”

And so the action adventure wars of 2003 draw to a close, *Jak II* winning by a stroke. That said, we've still got *Beyond Good & Evil* to come (see page 20 of this very issue), a game with the potential to creep up on them both and tie their shoelaces together. All of which makes *Locked and Loaded* a non-essential but at the same time highly recommended title. It's never going to change your life – only you and the giggling demons writhing naked in hidden folders on your hard-drive can do that – but it will deduct a few weeks from your existence with the minimum of fuss.

/ JON BROWN



A QUICK CLANK With Clank on your back you can jump further.

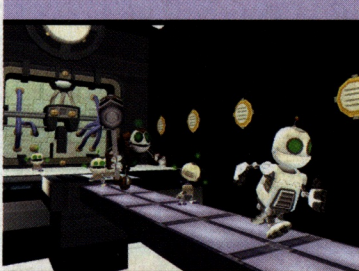


THE PERFECT CLANK

CLANK IS GOOD. NOT ONLY DOES HE GO GIANT AT ONE STAGE, HE ALSO HAS HIS OWN TROOP OF ROBOTS.



ATTACK! > The smallest of your droids can be sent in to attack enemies that you don't like the look of. Best thing is, if they die they respawn and jog back into the eye of the melee.



BRIDGE! > The bridge fellow, somewhat long in the middle body, lays himself over gaps to allow you and your robots access to the next section. Don't wear stilettos. That's just cruel.



LIFT! > Large blocks obstructing your way can be heaved away by a lifter robot. If you've ever played *Pikmin* on the GameCube (pardon us) you'll be instantly at home with all this.

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS		> DOWNERS	
> Shooting is fun		> Fairly linear	
> And so is racing		> Nothing new	
> And so is flying		> Smaller than <i>Jak II</i>	
> And so is jumping		> Ratchet's still a dick	
GRAPHICS	> Big explosions, bigger environments		8
SOUNDS	> So mediocre, describing is difficult		5
GAMEPLAY	> A dense cloud of game types		9
OVERALL SCORE			
A high-calibre platform title that, in the final analysis, doesn't quite have the level of invention required to nudge it into the upper echelons of our affections.			
			8



FORD RACING 2

NEVER MIND THE QUALITY – FEEL THAT LOW, LOW PRICE. FORD CEMENTS ITS REPUTATION AS THE KING OF VALUE-ADDED GOODNESS.

> TYPE	RACING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	OCTOBER
> PUBLISHER	EMPIRE
> PRICE	£15
> DEVELOPER	RAZORWORKS
> ONLINE	NO

FORD RACING 2 IS ONLY 15 QUID. THERE.

That's all the review you need. Now go out and buy it. And smile at the girl on the counter as you do so. Smile and say thank you as she holds your twenty-pound note up to the light. Because for the price of two kebabs and a cinema ticket (in the market for a girlfriend are we sir?) you've just bought yourself a tidy little racer that will keep you out of trouble for weeks if not months.

Thirty-two of Ford's finest motors are in the game, which means there's no room for rubbishy Kas or Mondeos. Anyway, what you do get is some of the motoring world's most iconic

automobiles, including Steve McQueen's *Bullitt* racer, *Starsky and Hutch*'s dudemobile and, erm, the car that Tom Hanks drove in *Sleepless in Seattle*. Probably, due to those pesky licensing conditions, Ford aren't actually allowed to mention which ones are from which film, they're all conveniently grouped together in one category. And we're telling you which ones some of them are, anyway, in the box over there. The other categories include off-road, classics and a bunch of half-arsed concept cars, which thankfully never made it to the streets. You can have any colour you like, as long as... no, you

really can. Within Ford's extremely limited palette, which is usually red or blue for modern cars, and funereal pastel shades for the oldsters. But at least it's not just black all the way.

A-FORD-ABLE FUN. DO YOU SEE?

So why is *FR2* on sale for only 15 of your Earth smackers? Well, it's not obviously the graphics. Lovingly rendered Fordmobiles fly around expansive, detailed tracks that reminded us of titles as diverse as Sega's *Daytona USA* and the little-known EA racer *Shox*. In case that doesn't help at all, what we mean is that the tracks are all sunny and leafy, when they're not being all urban and bridgey and high-risey. The cars look fine as long as you don't examine them too closely, where the level of detail doesn't quite match up to *Gran Turismo*. A wealth of dust, light and fog effects help hide all the rough edges though, resulting in a game that's far prettier than many a full-priced racer we could name.

So what is it, then? Well, to be blunt, there's not a lot of game here. Thirty-two cars gives you 32 races. The game hopes you'll extend its life by playing them on easy, normal and hard settings. Given that even Easy mode isn't a cinch to



GREEN DEMON Beat this car in a one-on-one duel to win.



KEEP YOUR FOCUS Colin McRae's old motor is in here.



master, they might be right. Mind you, we're a bit suspicious of the way cars can suddenly overtake you on straight bits of road without any reason – could there be a bit of cheating catch-up at play here? Okay, so 32 tracks would sound impressive, but what we're talking about here is 32 races, with the same cars and the same goals every time. These aren't always straight competitions with other cars to be first past the flag. There're also challenges where you have to collect icons as you speed round the track, drive through gates and even (yawn) keep to the racing line to succeed. Needless to say, these pseudo-driving tests are about as exciting as watching a documentary about Latvian needlework. With the sound turned down. In an overly warm room. After swallowing horse tranquilizers and a mug of Ovaltine. Still, it breaks things up a bit. No, it doesn't, actually. It's just plain dull.

MAKING TRACKS

The other way *Ford Racing* hopes to justify its baby-sized cash outlay is to let you, the player, actually have a hand in finishing off the game. That's right – once you've unlocked the cars through the races, you can make your own challenges with the vehicles and tracks you have access to. Nice idea, but it doesn't really flesh the game out beyond giving you a reason to win the cars in the first place. A nice touch is that if you win the car in Easy mode, you'll only be able to play challenges with it on Easy mode. On second thoughts, that's not a nice touch, it's a

“LIKE A HALFWIT DOING THE POLE VAULT AT A SPECIAL SCHOOL SPORTS DAY, IT'S AIMED LOW AND CLEARED THE BAR. AND NO ONE'S HURT.”

boring touch. Ah well, 15 quid though, eh?

But when all is said and done, and done and said, and said and done, it actually plays a good game of racing. It can feel pretty speedy at times, although the handling can be a bit clunky. The game cheats on the feeling of speed by simply lowering the first-person camera so it's nearly touching the tarmac. You'll feel like the world's fastest daschund. If we'd been charged full whack for this game, instead of just a Toucan (new PSW cockney slang for £15), we'd have had the following complaints: why isn't every Ford represented? We want the Model T and the souped-up Escort. Why is there no damage or even any performance hit when you crash? Why is the handling slightly muddy, and why do some cars seem to turn from the middle rather than from the wheels? And why is the main game so short?

But as it is, *Ford Racing* is let off all these quibbles purely because it's less than half the usual price. Like a stumbling halfwit doing the pole vault at Special School Sports Day, it's aimed low, it's cleared the bar and it's miraculously failed to injure anyone along the way. Well done, *Ford Racing 2*. You've won the solid bronze medal for averageness.

/ JOFF BROWN

THE FAST AND THE SPURIOUS

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THE MOVIES THESE FOUR FORD RACING CARS STARRED IN? COME ON. IT'S EASIER THAN ULRIKA.



'71 MUSTANG MACH 1 This one was driven by a diamond geezer. Mind you, it won't last forever.



'73 MUSTANG MACH 1 In this, you'll be gone. In a minute. By which we mean 60 seconds.



2003 LE THUNDERBIRD Bond with this and you won't die on this day. It'll be another one.



'76 GRAN TORINO If you're looking at a star in the sky, try driving this cop car into a hutch.

ANSWERS: a) For God's sake b) If you need help c) With these answers d) Go back to special school.

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS	DOWNERS
> Fifteen quid!	> Handling's a bit odd
> Looks alright	> It's pretty short
> Plays OK	> Far from comprehensive
> Fifteen quid again!	> Racing line following's dull

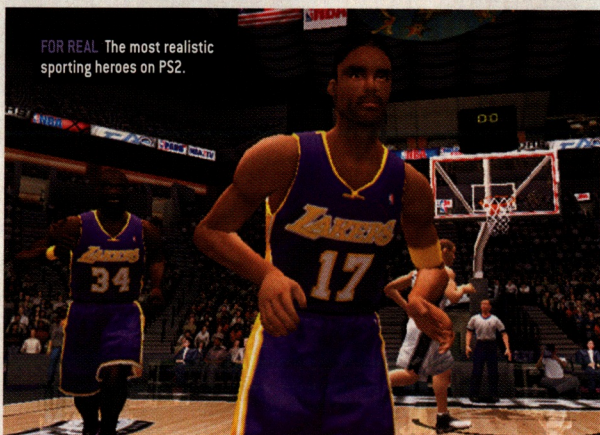
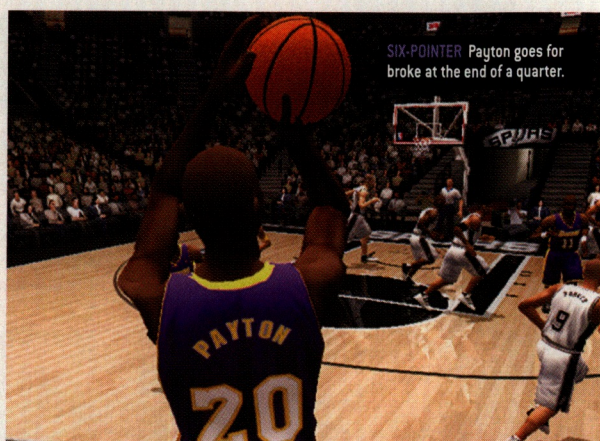
GRAPHICS > Don't look closely and be impressed **7**

SOUNDS > Racing whines, paint-by-numbers rock **5**

GAMEPLAY > Tolerate the handling and you'll have fun **7**

OVERALL SCORE
Nice at the price. We like to think of it as the Kinder Egg toy of games – cheap and mildly diverting. Only less covered in smooth, smooth chocolate. Mmm, Kinder Eggs...

8



NBA LIVE 2004

ELECTRONIC ARTS, THE PLAYERS THAT DO THIS SHIT FROM THE HEART, USE COMEDY RAPPING FROM THE VERY START.

> TYPE	BASKETBALL
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	EA
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	EA
> ONLINE	NO

IN THE RELENTLESS EA SPORTS PRODUCTION

line, no sport remains outside of the realms of possibility. Every sport is eventually identified, evaluated for popularity and put on a game disc. Buying an EA game based on your favourite sport is a hit and miss affair, however. Choosing a good EA Sports title is similar to attending a speed dating session while blindfolded, hoping to find a beauty but running a very real risk that you'll end up with a spoon-faced beast.

Tiger Woods and Madden NFL are the lookers, while FIFA and Rugby seriously let the side down,

stumbling from the EA conveyor belt looking like dizzy, inbred mutants. Praise the Lord, then, that basketball has been recreated in a suitably alluring manner by EA.

NBA Live 2004 is the most accurate basketball game on PlayStation2 in terms of stats, teams, players and stadia. Whether you support a regular team such as the Chicago Bulls or want to build a team of fresh-faced college bean poles, NBA Live 2004 has more players than any rival title. Rather than focus on the arcade-style shoot outs of the NBA Street series, NBA Live 2004 is a realistic conversion of the sport. You can pick an official team and play a full season, build and manage a fantasy team or even head back in time and pick a classic line-up in the Dynasty mode.

EA has done a superb job of recreating the big match atmosphere of each game. Crowds whoop, commentators bellow and real players introduce the game via video clips, which catch them off court during real life games. Naturally, EA takes the authentic feeling a tad too far by overloading NBA Live 2004 with hip hop tracks, amusingly including a couple of rap compositions that name check EA Sports and NBA Live 2004. Needless to say, these tracks sound like your mum rapping about house cleaning.

In terms of gameplay, the pace is as fast as you would expect and selecting individual players is fluid and hassle free. The FIFA-style passing system, which highlights potential receivers with button icons, is used to good effect and there are plenty of rewarding tricks to be mastered. The

replay option is simply stunning and even beats FIFA in terms of sheer player detail. Pause the game and you can zoom around your ballers frozen in mid-air, observing the whites of their eyes or attempting to look up their shorts. While we were half expecting to find motion-captured genitalia, all that we found was darkness. We assume this isn't EA skimping on detail, rather a "no nudity" clause in the contract of each player.

If you're seriously into basketball, NBA Live 2004 is by far the most playable and authentic simulation available. If, on the other hand, you only pretend to be down with the ultra-bling lifestyle of the sport and can't name more than two teams, we'd recommend you take a look at the infinitely more accessible NBA Street Vol.2. And dude, we promise we won't tell anyone.

/ RICHARD MELVILLE



PS2 VERDICT

> UPBERS		> DOWNERS
> All the teams, all the players		> Bad in-house rap tracks
> Players look almost real		> New controls need practice
> Stacks of game modes		> No ghettofab street action
> Footage of real ballers		> No cheerleaders. Boo
GRAPHICS	> Look at the nose hair!	9
SOUNDS	> Great commentary and 'novel' hip hop	7
GAMEPLAY	> Simple controls and fun tricks	8
OVERALL SCORE		
The most authentic and exciting basketball game on PS2. EA doesn't compromise gameplay for glitz this time around. NBA Live 2004 delivers both. We just wish FIFA was this good.		
		8



HUNTER: THE RECKONING WAYWARD

AN ULTRA-VIOLENT ZOMBIE SLASHER WITH AN INSATIABLE THIRST FOR THE RED STUFF AND A DISAPPOINTINGLY HOLLOW CORE. AS FOR THE NAME, JUST DON'T ASK.

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	WHITE WOLF STUDIOS
> ONLINE	NO

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN YOU COULD SPOT A vampire in a crowded room by the widow's peak, the flowing cape and the bleeding virgin leaking life-giving claret over the carpet. Not these days. If telly and cinema are to be believed (and we know of no higher authority) they wear more black leather than Suzi Quattro, listen to Marilyn Manson and wear curiously high-soled shoes. And so do the people who hunt 'em down. *Hunter: The Reckoning Wayward* tells us so.

If you've ever played the role-playing games *Vampire: The Masquerade* or *Werewolf: The Apocalypse* (no, us neither. Too busy playing video games) you'll recognise lots here. The Hunters are a group of vaguely religious-nutter

types who spend their time eliminating all manner of supernatural evil. Sounds as good an excuse for a heavy-heavy undead killing title as we need, then. In fact, vampires themselves aren't much in evidence here. It's mostly about the zombies, or rots as they're inexplicably known in the *Hunter* world. And the number of shambling, moaning rots coming after you is impressive – it means they aren't just a pack. Stop decimating them for a few seconds and soon they're a fully fledged horde; a scabby army that would get Michael Jackson calling his choreographer. Thankfully your standard attack knocks out a rot in a hit or two, entertainingly cutting them in two, severing their heads or ripping them open. By then, there's another six coming at you in that deceptively fast waddle while zombies seem to have got down perfectly.

The top-down view may confuse the unwary – all you see is the top of your player's noggin and the reaching arms of the assorted dead folk coming after you. It's like watching all the action from stilts. The benefit from the viewpoint is you're much more in control of what happens behind you. Zombie sneaking up on you? Not for long. Thanks to some natty controls, you can run in any direction no matter which way you're firing. Meaning there's plenty of room for *Max Payne*-style rolls, strafes and stylish executions. If you squint, you can just make 'em out. An "edge" move gives you a special attack or power that adds some natty effects and gives you a chance to save the day in the name of tats, beads and dreadlocks, we suppose.

Downsides? There're a few too many missions

that depend on running round like a nutter looking for a single item in a great big map and taking it back. If we wanted to be couriers we'd have dyed our hair purple, pierced our tongues and changed our name to Miguel, thanks. The fighting gets undeniably samey after a while, because this isn't the deepest game in the world. But then it's not meant to be. At its dark and hollow core, *Hunter* is a *Gauntlet* clone. What's amazing is just how little this matters. We reckon it's a lot more fun this way, and fans of *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance* will recognise the surprising charm of a high-up camera. The only thing lacking is what made *Gauntlet* the most fun: a four-player mode enabling you to bash undead trash with three friends. On the other hand, if you could play *Hunter* with three friends you'd have enough for an ultra destructive nu-metal band anyway. Go rock!

/ JOFF BROWN



READY TO RUMBLE The urban barbarian kills a zombie every 0.006 seconds, creating a mess.

PSW VERDICT	
> UPBERS > Detailed, atmospheric looks > Excellent fighting > Mad bosses > Fancy spells	> DOWNERS > No four-player mode > Action gets repetitive > A leetle beet seelly > Unremittingly dark
GRAPHICS > Top-down, but surprisingly in-depth	8
SOUNDS > Goth groans annoy, but effects are meaty	7
GAMEPLAY > Repetitive, but killing ghouls is still a blast	7
OVERALL SCORE Proof that a lot of polish whipped up with some fairly simple gameplay and a dash of gothic style can create a pretty nice title. Our reckoning? Nice one <i>Hunter</i> .	
7	



SWAT: GLOBAL STRIKE TEAM

A PO-FACED SHOOTER SMOTHERED IN BUCKETLOADS OF REALISM.
BUT SINCE WHEN HAS ACCURACY BEEN A SUBSTITUTE FOR FUN?



> TYPE	SHOOTING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	ARGONAUT GAMES
> ONLINE	NO

OK, OK. HANDS UP WHICH GAMES THINK they're intelligent. You, *Metal Gear Solid 2*? Yes, of course you are. Have a hobnob. You, *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*? Well, people think you're a bit of a thug, but underneath you're a real whizz-kid. A pink wafer for you. Who's that at the back, sticking their hand up and making eager groaning noises? Why, it's *SWAT: Global Strike Team*. Ahahahaha. No, son. You're not clever. You just think you're clever because you come from a PC game family and you're all "tactical". Well, let us tell you, here at PSW that don't mean jack. No biscuits for you, son. Out! Out of the PSW classroom!

OK, so that may be a bit harsh, but it's essentially true. *SWAT*'s another one of those squad-based shooters that keep cropping up these days. We're fairly sure the people who make them think they're The Future of Games. We're not convinced. You're part of some made-up near-future strike team that's mysteriously empowered to sort out conflicts all over the globe. Americans, we think they call 'em. Your task is to infiltrate enemy hideouts with the minimum amount of fuss, and kill everyone.

So what does it play like? Most of the time, you control Mathias Kincaid, team leader and old hand at the anti-terrorism game. Occasionally you'll find yourself transposed into the fit body of female sniper Lee, as she attempts to pick off far-off criminals.

What this comes down to is: you enter a room and neutralise everyone inside it. Then you move onto the next one as quickly and painlessly as possible, without hurting any innocents. It's probably the way these things happen in real life, but oddly it's not the most enthralling concept for a game. Like most games without a radar, stealth doesn't really play a part. It's mostly a case of entering a room and either shooting or shouting down everyone in it. Perhaps the most original bit of thinking is that you can't just blow everyone away, they have to be shooting at you, or you'll be in breach of regulations. This means that if you're going to knock out someone from behind, you have to use your less-than-lethal weapons like the tranquilliser dart. Play a level again, and sometimes enemies will come from different places, providing a welcome change to the routine of shooting your way

through each time and stopping you from getting too complacent.

Fortunately, you're also gifted with classic video game resilience, allowing you to take several shots to the chest without dying. There may not seem much point in having people leap out at you if you can let them shoot hopelessly at you as you run up and hit them in the face, but it does mean you get the chance to use non-lethal force a bit more. If you manage to stop killing everyone and arrest them instead, the game rewards you with medals, plus extra features like movie sequences, which should keep you playing for a while. But by far the best way to play is in the ten different co-operative levels, covering areas with a partner. The problem is this: it's just not that fun. There, we said it.

SWAT'S THE PROBLEM?

And while we're bitching, let's talk about the way *SWAT* looks. Because it doesn't look great. It looks like all the other supposedly tactical squad-based games before it, only half as good. Some walls and objects have got that horrible, horrible blurry look that grabs you by the throat and screams

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

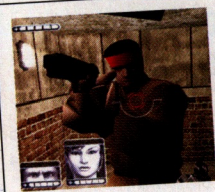
...MATTHIAS KINCAID, TERRORIST KILLER AND ALL-ROUND VIDEOGAME HERO

Another day on the job, and I'm stuck in the London Underground. This SWAT team is global, you see. Our jobs take us anywhere. As long as there's corridors.

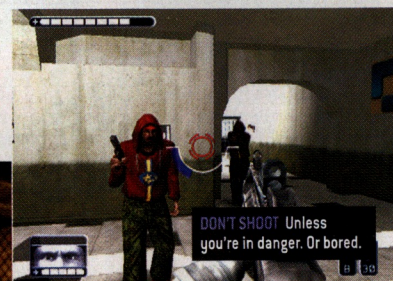


Spotted this poster on the tube station. Those crazy limeys sure take their advertising seriously! I must remember to pick up a can of this stuff for the folks back home.

This is Lee, who I really like. I'm not a bummer – that's her surname, you see? She snipes, and also picks locks. But there's only ever locks to pick when she's around. That's odd...



This is a bad guy. He shot me full in the face, but I didn't even flinch! I love SWAT and everything it stands for. Which is Special Weapons and Tactics, obviously! Har de har!



"THEY DIDN'T TRY VERY HARD, DID THEY?" at you until you cry. People move around like puppets under the control of a horse-tranquilised child-molester, and look like they've been hewn out of jelly with the world's largest spoon. Even the reds and greens look a dirty grey. In the sci-fi future year of 2003, where robot dogs live in our homes, music exists on microchips and Geri Halliwell's baps can instantly grow to an enormous size, this just isn't good enough. We know it's in the service of making everything look "real", but it doesn't really work.



GREEN MEANIE Night vision goggles. Well, what a surprise...

"YOU JUST THINK YOU'RE CLEVER BECAUSE YOU'RE FROM A PC GAME FAMILY. THAT DON'T MEAN JACK TO US, SON."

OOH, YOU GIRLY SWAT

The one silver bullet in SWAT's pistol is the innovative use of voice recognition to bark commands to other characters. Get hold of a USB mike and headphones, and you can yell at enemies to surrender or comrades to comply – and they do. Does it work? Yes, pretty well, and when it doesn't it's a great excuse to yell at the screen some more until it does. Is it worth it? Um, not really. We're not saying there's anything wrong with the voice-recognition technology, it's just that the same commands can be issued with an elegant press of a directional pad button with far less stress. Using the mic is fine if you a) desperately want to be a SWAT team guy in the real world, or b) have a lot of anger to get out, but we really can't recommend it for any gamer who can still show his face amongst other mortals.

At the end of the day, SWAT ticks all the right boxes (multiplayer, tactical, voice recognition) but lets itself down by just not being that amazing. The recent *SOCOM: Navy Seals* provides a more tense game, with the added bonus of online play. If you'd like a truly great single-player squaddy title, try the unmatchably atmospheric *Freedom Fighters* or wait for *Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm*. OK?

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS		DOWNERS	
You can yell at the TV		Looks dull, plays dull	
Co-op modes are fun		Should be online really	
Enemies change places		Makes socks look exciting	
Voices add atmosphere		Not really very tactical	
GRAPHICS	Bland baddies, unenticing environments		5
SOUNDS	Bad acting, but you can do the shouting		7
GAMEPLAY	Simpler than you'd expect, but not bad		6
OVERALL SCORE			
Not quite the game it should have been. The voice recognition stuff is a neat addition to the tactical shooting, but otherwise it offers little to prise you away from the superior <i>SOCOM</i> .			
			6



CLUB FOOTBALL

THERE ARE MORE FOOTBALL GAMES ON PS2 THAN FOREIGN PLAYERS AT CHELSEA AND ARSENAL COMBINED. SO WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL ANOTHER 17 MAKE?

> TYPE	FOOTBALL
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	OCTOBER
> PUBLISHER	CODEMASTERS
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	CODEMASTERS
> ONLINE	NO

OK, OK, WE WERE ALL SET UP FOR A BIG disappointment here, but *Club Football* hasn't ruined our week. Somewhere between *Pro Evolution Soccer 3* (easily the best football game so far, let down by its lack of official teams, names, venues and competitions) and *FIFA 2004* (vague, unresponsive and imprecise gameplay, propped up by excellent presentation and stacks of officialness), *Club Football* borrows bits from both and adds some innovations of its own.

The whole "thing" about *Club Football* is that it's available in 17 different varieties, each themed around a specific team. This one here is *Man Utd Club Football*. The other teams? Arsenal, Aston Villa, Chelsea, Leeds United, Liverpool, Celtic, Rangers, Real Madrid, Borussia Dortmund, Hamburg, Bayern Munich, Ajax, Barcelona, AC Milan, FC Internazionale, and Juventus. Here's how it works. Let's say you're an Arsenal fan.



GAFFER TAPE Cut-scenes show the manager barking orders.

You'd probably buy a dog turd if it had an Arsenal badge on it, so obviously you'll buy the Arsenal game. Then you play a Premiership season as Arsenal. It's got Arsenal insignia all over it, pictures of Arsenal players for the loading screens and all kinds of Arsenal-themed stuff to unlock. Wallow in its pure, unadulterated Arsenalness. It's 110% Arsenal, with Arsenal sauce on top. Brilliant if you support one of the 17 teams. No so great if you don't.

Club Football immediately shepherds you into creating yourself within the game. Unless you're really rather strange looking, the player creator should be able to come up with a reasonable representation of your actual self. Divvy up a bank of points into speed, technique, and other skill categories, and your replicant is complete. You can even pick a commentary name from a huge vault of voice recordings. From here it's straight on into the first game of the season.

Initially you're just a squad player, so switch yourself for one of the first-team regulars. You'll want to be scoring goals, right? Who ever dreamed of becoming a professional defender? So get yourself up front, or at least in midfield. Fiddle around with the shamelessly PES-inspired formation options if you want, then get on with the action. *Club Football* employs a simple but effective trick to win over PES2 addicts – the controls are exactly the same. Bar a couple of PES2's finer touches, such as the pretty but useless step-over, it's all here, and all on the same buttons. Thank God for that.

Club Football plays well – much better than *FIFA*. Shooting is a bit of a lottery, which for a football game isn't great. General passing, tackling and running around is, however, pretty tight, so it ends up being more about getting into scoring positions than actually honing your shot technique. Spank it goal-wards from 20 yards enough times and sooner or later one of them'll go in. There's plenty of room for improvement in gameplay finesse, but the foundations are solid. Matchday comes complete with the familiar tones of Gary Lineker and Barry Davies, tossing out woolly but relevant comments before, during and after the games. All we need now is the game to be available in all Premiership and Nationwide flavours (like, er, where's Newcastle United – they finished THIRD last season!!!). Next year perhaps.

/ LEE NUTTER

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS		> DOWNERS
> Immersive Career mode		> No Training mode
> Sound gameplay		> Needs more teams
> Reassuringly official		> No internationals
> Lineker and Davies. Nice		> Not as good as PES3
GRAPHICS	> Recognisable players, but low detail	6
SOUNDS	> Authentic chants, good commentary	8
GAMEPLAY	> We prefer it to FIFA, but it's unpolished	7
OVERALL SCORE		
We had this one down on our PSW pools coupon as a scoreless bore draw. Thankfully, we were proved wrong over the course of an entertaining game peppered with schoolboy errors.		
		7



NBA JAM 2004

THE ONCE RAPID-FIRE PULSE OF AN ARCADE CLASSIC SLOWS TO HALF-SPEED, BEFORE THREATENING TO PETER OUT ALL TOGETHER.

> TYPE	BASKETBALL
> PLAYERS	1-6
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	ACCLAIM
> ONLINE	NO

WHAT RILES US MOST OF ALL ABOUT NBA JAM

2004 is its lack of atmosphere. This is supposed to be an arcade game. The sheen of the presentation should blind you. The roar of the crowd should deafen you. You should be on your knees vomiting with excitement within seconds, shielding your eyes to protect yourself from the clouds of powered razzle-dazzle being fired in your direction from the oversized cartoon blunderbuss marked 'FUN'. You want to be shouted at, to be violently shaken, to be left dizzied and mildly confused. That's how arcade games work – they pump out endless waves of smoke and clatter to distract you to such a degree that you never notice that the actual gameplay is thinner than sandwich ham. And the bottom line is, *NBA Jam '04* can't rouse itself to provide anything like the level of excitement

required to mask over it piddling shallowness. It feels stilted and tired, as though the *NBA Jam* players secretly wish Acclaim would just let them retire to the land of park benches and tinned sweets with some dignity. Instead, they've been levered out from the crevices of their armchairs and thrown up against *NBA Street Vol 2*, a game with infinite levels of imagination and life.

A comparison between the two soon reveals *NBA Jam '04* to be a dinosaur. An obscure one that didn't make the final cut of *Jurassic Park* because it walked too slowly and kept falling asleep between takes. It's a turtle-skinned grandad in a Gola tracksuit and Pony hi-tops struggling to keep up with athletes half a century his junior, who kick its arse and laugh every time it feels over to cough up another dollop of brown, treacle-like phlegm.

The most immediate difference between the previous generation of *Jam* and this one is that it's now three-on-three and not two-on-two. This isn't a good thing. The only reason the original game was worth playing at all was because it had the cajones to strip the sport of basketball down to its underwear, brazenly removing layers and layers of needless rules and superfluous players. An increase in the number of men on each team results in slower play and a more cluttered court, neither of which endear us to this 2004 update. If we're honest, the only pure nugget of fun we can sniff out is provided by the commentator, who frequently brightens up the play by unknowingly

uttering obscene passages of dialogue. "He's going to have to loosen his belt – he just ate a whole lot of wood," made us laugh every time we heard it, as did, "He delivers the facial." The outright winner has to be the classic, "He's just eaten more wood than a beaver on Thanksgiving," which, if you take 'wood' to mean 'erection' and 'beaver' to mean 'fanny' could even be a triple-entendre. We're not sure if that's technically possible.

A disappointment then. Though not a complete disaster – wrap the cord of your multitap around its neck and you and your mates might manage to throttle a couple of droplets of enjoyment from it – the promised headrush dissipates early on and leaves you with a dull, aching thud.

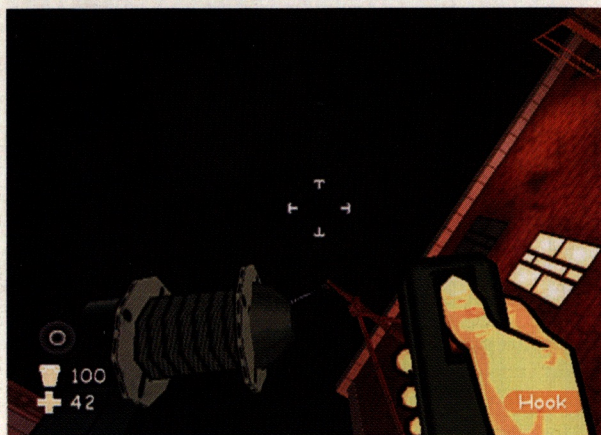
/ JON BROWN



SHOVE OFF There's not much fun to be found here.

PSW VERDICT

> UPPERS		> DOWNERS	
> Easy to pick up		> Not loud or fast enough	
> Dunks look OK		> Controls are woolly	
> Solid selection of teams		> Definite lack of tricks	
> Good four-player game		> Extremely repetitive	
GRAPHICS > Should've been smoother and bigger			5
SOUNDS > Should've been louder and hip-hopier			7
GAMEPLAY > Should've been quicker and deeper			5
OVERALL SCORE		NBA Jam's comeback game ends in tears, shoving and failure. More fun than a pornography famine, less fun than sliding over a freshly washed kitchen floor in football socks.	
		6	



HANGER-ON The hook is a tricky gadget to get the hang of, but is often needed.



LYING ON THE JOB The panels show the guard snuffing it.



BODYGUARD You have to follow Jones and protect her.



XIII

THE BOURNE IDENTITY MEETS 24 IN A GAME MORE STYLISH THAN THE PAIR OF THEM. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE SAYING THAT BEGINS "ALL STYLE"...



> TYPE	SHOOTING
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
> ONLINE	YES

AS IF ADMITTING THAT YOU LOVE VIDEO

games to prospective girlfriends isn't enough of a challenge, imagine hitting them with the double-whammy of raving about a comic book-style game. "So you're into games *and* comics, then? That's so, um, cool." You'd stand a better chance of pulling if you confessed to that STD you've been carrying for a few months and boasted about enjoying a minimum four hand-shandys a day. But for once we don't care, and not just because we're virtually celibate anyway through no choice

of our own. *XIII* is one of the most stylish games we've ever played. So stylish, in fact, that it almost manages to convince us that it's more than just another first-person shooter in which you carry lots of big guns and shoot lots of very bad people. Almost.

Right from the opening sequence of the forty-third US President being assassinated, set to a finger-clickin', '70s-influenced groove, the game does its very best impression of a comic book designed for adults. Everything is deliberately

over-the-top and overblown, from the three pop-up windows that highlight a clean headshot by revelling in the entry and exit wounds, to the 24-style cutaway panels used to reveal separate or significant moments of the twisty story. Apparently it's based on a Belgian comic (or at least the first five parts), though your guess is as good as ours if it does the obscure series justice.

SOUNDING OFF

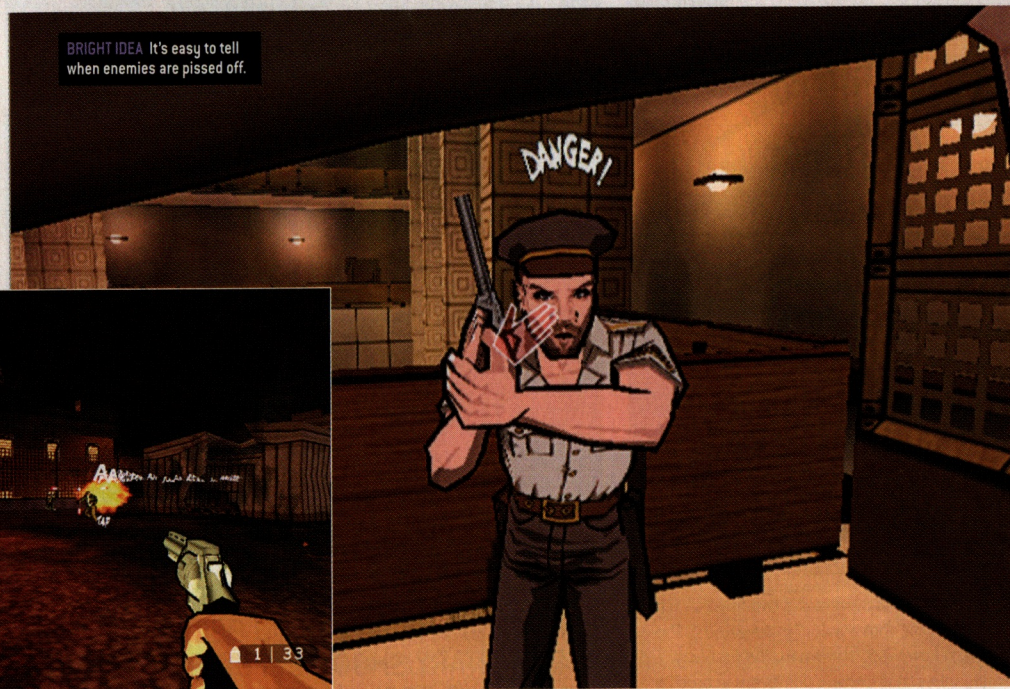
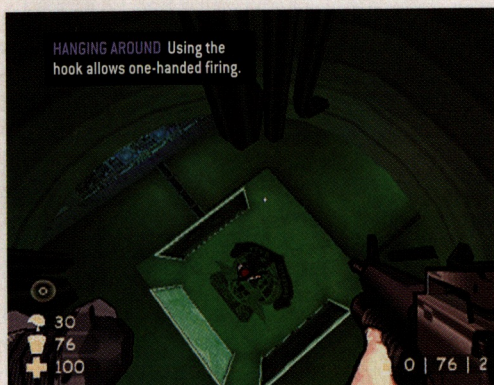
Obviously it looks fantastic. Just maybe not initially. If you haven't been following the game's progress, the 'toon-shaded graphics might seem kind of simplistic at first for those who gorge themselves on more realistic shooters such as *Ghost Recon* – as though the comic styling is just an excuse for the lack of detail. Not so. Those into their comics will note the subtle use of colour and other artistic bollocks that we don't necessarily appreciate. Study the screenshots before you for more on that. There's detail in the simplicity. Sound is even embodied by onomatopoeic taps for footsteps, bams for gunshots, and aarrggghhs [give or take a few "g"s and "h"s] when an enemy is shot. If this last



DREAMS OF FLYING Even seeing a chopper induces a flashback.



BOLT FROM THE BLUE Take out snipers first with the crossbow.



"THOSE INTO THEIR COMICS WILL NOTE ARTISTIC BOLLOCKS WE DON'T NECESSARILY APPRECIATE."

part makes less sense than David Duchovny's seemingly drugged-up voiceover for the lead character, then think back to those punch-ups that epitomise the camp *Batman* 60s TV series. Got it now? Good.

Like an anorexic model too busy chucking up her lettuce leaf lunch backstage to stride down the catwalk, such glamour and gloss would be a waste of time without any substance. Fortunately, on more than one occasion when *XIII* threatens to become a rudimentary shoot 'em up, either a plot twist kicks in or something downright cool happens that elevates the action above the ordinary. Your character suffers from amnesia, so without much backstory to go on anything that happens to him is also new to you. Certain events and characters induce semi-playable flashback sequences (in other words you can move around a bit), which intriguingly hint at his past life as a secret agent or even contradict your own theories about what the hell's going on. For example, your only possession when the game begins is the key to a bank's safety deposit box containing a secret document and a bomb, suggesting you've been set up. However, an immediate flashback reveals you and a female accomplice planted the explosive

instead. You don't initially discover why, how, or even the girl's identity. You just know you want to keep playing to find out, which says a lot.

DON'T BOTTLE IT

Much has been made of the ability to use any object as a weapon, but it's only really relevant in the first few levels when you either don't possess a gun, or aren't allowed to slaughter security guards and FBI agents. Bottles, chairs and spades are freely available to bludgeon people unconscious with, though more could have been made of taking civilians hostage and using enemies as human shields. It's also strange that one whack knocks enemies out, yet they can withstand four or five bullets to any part of their body below the head. Once past the third level, the stock arsenal of shotguns and machineguns are your bread and butter, which would be totally fine were it not for the fact that some missions automatically end if an enemy raises the alarm. The worst example of this is the fourth level, set in and around a military base, where your boss General Carrington is imprisoned for uncovering too much about the hit on the President. Without a proper stealth movement or even a run/walk toggle available, it's incredibly difficult to creep past the guards without them seeing you and then hitting the big red button. Sure, you're given a healthy supply of silent but deadly throwing blades to take them out from a distance one at a time, but for the most part it's like asking Rik Waller to act inconspicuous in a pie shop.

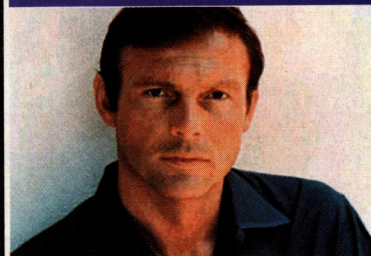
THE TRUTH IS IN HERE

WHO'S WHO IN THE CONSPIRACY-LADEN WORLD OF *XIII* – AND THE VOICE-ACTING TALENT YOU MAY OR MAY NOT RECOGNISE.



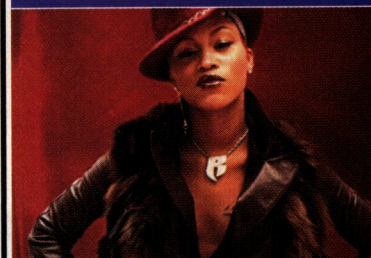
> DAVID DUCHOVNY

PLAYS? *Amnesiac XIII*, who might also be secret agent Steve Rowland and a President killer. Cripes! Duchovny left Agent Mulder and her *X-Files* behind to get away from aliens and government conspiracy theories. Subsequent work includes alien "comedy", *Evolution*, and now this game about a government conspiracy. Did well for himself then. Ahem.



> ADAM WEST

PLAYS? General Carrington, the US military's chief of staff who's conducting his own investigation into the assassination. The former *Caped Crusader* has done buggar all of note since his last kerpow in 1968, and has seemingly been chosen solely because the game features cartoon text. At least we don't have to see him squeezed into a costume.



> EVE

PLAYS? Major Jones, who assists General Carrington with his snooping around and has apparently worked with XIII before. She's black and streetwise, which automatically means a rapper must play the part. It could have been any interchangeable R&B/rap artist and we wouldn't have noticed the difference. Unless 50 Cent fancied a go.

Carrington and other allies, such as Jones, your female buddy from earlier, tend to prove more of a hindrance than help. For some reason, it's entirely your responsibility to ensure they don't snuff it, with the dodderly General a particularly tiresome companion. Coming straight from prison with nothing but



HAVE A SEAT Chairs, bottles and spades make good weapons.



BOXED IN Like your good self, enemies will find and use cover.

cigars in his inventory, he still has the gall to bark orders at you and go on suicidal dashes across open terrain, during which you're expected to cover him. It's not exciting, it's just stupidity. His rescue also drags on for three levels, but it seems much longer when you're not really being asked to do much more than react to another character and gun down waves of identical enemies. The fact that it's a character you don't really know and consequently don't give a toss about makes it even worse. *XIII* is a far better game when it's just you working alone against the odds and discovering stuff for yourself.

The linear unravelling of the plot and lack of hidden bonuses means that once the game is finished there's only one reason to consider going back for more. Which brings us to multiplayer. For once the selection of modes is

pretty decent and even sticks two fingers up at the PC version, with a pair of extra games - The Hunt and Power-Up - thrown in. The first is two-player split-screen, where points are scored for damaging a moving target which becomes smaller every time it's hit. The second can also be played online for up to four players and is a typical Deathmatch game sporting a couple of inventive power-ups. Like the single-player maps, the level design is pretty standard fare, with just enough flair and style to persuade your eyes that they're seeing something fresh and original while upstairs your brain screams you've seen it all before. The eyes have it.

This pretty much sums up *XIII* as a whole. In terms of story it's a familiar yarn of a character waking up with amnesia and finding his past coming back to haunt him.



SHOCK TACTICS It was clear before, but now you've got to time your descent past the electricity.



"WHEN XIII THREATENS TO BECOME A RUDIMENTARY SHOOT 'EM UP, SOMETHING DOWNRIGHT COOL HAPPENS."

Hello *The Bourne Identity*. The weapons and gadgets are no different from any other first-person shooter or *Bond* game, while in terms of the maps and level design all the clichés are in place, from the obligatory snowbound resort to medi-kits and ammo stupidly left lying around. Yet everything is carried off with such panache that it doesn't really matter. You're so deeply engrossed in the ongoing story and so busy marvelling at how effective the comic book touches are that you simply don't have time to pick the whole thing apart.

If nothing else, those who complete the game within a few days will at least be able to irritate comic book bores by referencing an obscure Belgian series even they won't have heard of. And that's got to count for something.

/ JONATHAN TODD

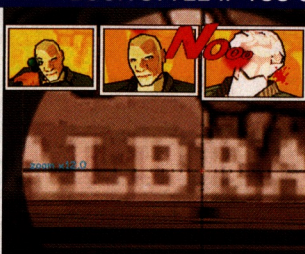
TALK OF THE 'TOON

IT'S NO USE US RATTLING ON ABOUT THE COMIC BOOK STYLE IF YOU CAN'T SEE HOW IT'S USED.



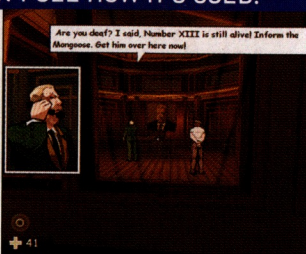
FOOTSTEPS

Instead of looking at a boring old radar, see the location and proximity of an enemy by the position and size of the "tap" cartoon words.



HEADSHOTS

Three pop-up panels appear in real-time as the bullet from your sniper rifle tears through an enemy's grey matter and out the other side.



CLUES

Whenever something significant happens in the story, a cutaway panel takes a closer look. Designed to make you go: "ooh, did you see that?"

PSW VERDICT

UPPERS	DOWNERS
> A lesson in style	> A couple of dud levels
> Compelling story	> Some stock level design
> Effective comic touches	> Allies are a hindrance
> Decent Multiplayer modes	> We've seen a lot of it before

GRAPHICS > As distinctive as you're likely to see **8**

SOUNDS > Mixed voice-acting, decent weapon effects **7**

GAMEPLAY > Standard blasting, but stylishly done **8**

OVERALL SCORE
The plot and graphics are certainly memorable, though we get the feeling this sometimes covers up a couple of lacklustre levels. Still, there's substance to go with the style.

8

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JAMES BOND - 119914
Main Theme
License to Kill
Live And Let Die

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By The Way
Under The Bridge
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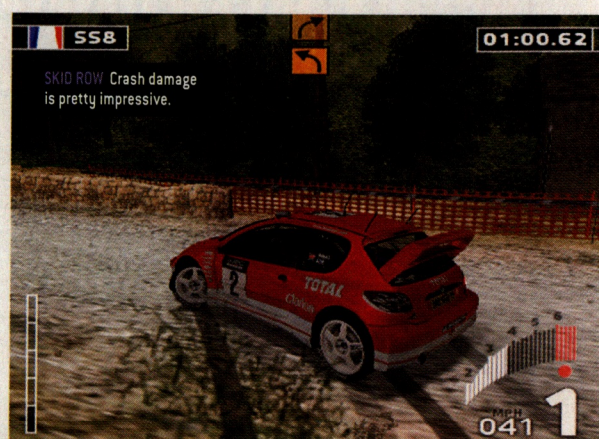


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WRC3

SECONDS AFTER COLIN MCRAE COMPLETES HIS FOURTH STAGE TO A STANDING OVATION, WRC SLIPS INTO THIRD AND ATTEMPTS TO RECLAIM THE TRACK RECORD.



> TYPE	DRIVING
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	SONY
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	EVOLUTION STUDIOS
> ONLINE	NO

WRC3'S STAGES ARE THE MOST IMPRESSIVE

we've ever seen. For proof of this, come with us to the French Riviera to take part in the third stage of the rally of Monte Carlo. You begin on a sunny mountainside with only 100 yards of road in front of you. Having crept forward to peer over the edge, like a child at the top of a slide, you quickly come to the realisation that you're in heaven. How else to explain your vantage point, from where

you can see the entire world laid out before you like a dirty tablecloth? Fearing that you're minutes away from being invited to share tea and crumpets with God and Harry Secombe, you flee and begin working your way down the mountainside at extreme speeds. At the bottom – you've just fallen about 200 feet in seconds – you're diverted left into a small village, then over a bridge and onto another winding mountain road. Now you're working your way back up towards the pearly gates, moving two feet skywards for every five feet forwards. Your ears pop. Or was that your engine backfiring? As you rise and rise and rise, snow starts falling, making road conditions hazardous and calling for a hasty reunion with brake pedal, which up until this point has been completely ignored.

The climate often changes more than once during a WRC3 stage. Monte Carlo goes from snow to sun back to snow again. Turkey (the only new country) starts out sunny, then gets wet, then snowy. All of which leaves you with just one problem: what to wear? Coat or jumper? It might be warm when you get in the car, but by the time you get out again it could be freezing. Why not wear a body-warmer? Best of both worlds.

Like so many of WRC3's stages, Monte Carlo

number three is a beautiful jumble of extreme dips, punishing hills, tight hairpins and breathtaking views. The game looks this good throughout, even if small objects like posts and plants have a nasty habit of suddenly popping into view. More importantly, it also plays exceptionally well, the cars handling with a level of assuredness you'd expect of a big-name rally series now into its third instalment.

BUILD ME UP BUTTERCUP

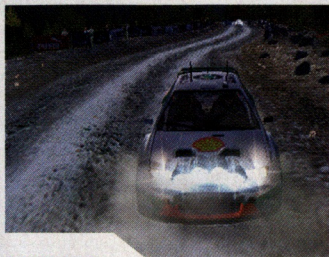
But before you get into the race proper, the build-up. Your natural gamer's impulse tugs at your sleeve and tells you to skip through all the flannel



BLOWING HOT AND COLD The weather is constantly changing.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE? WHICH RALLY GAME LETS YOU SMASH UP YOUR CAR THE MOST – WRC3 OR COLIN McRAE 04? FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK...

WRC3



0 MINUTES

You've literally just driven over the start line. So far, you've managed to avoid walls, buildings, cliffs, spectators and... look out for that....

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

None at all. Everything is rosy. Mmm. Love that new car smell.

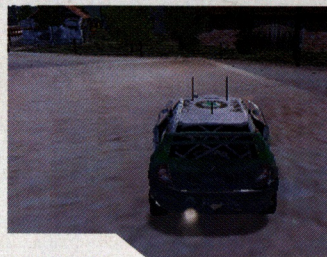


5 MINUTES

How did that happen? It's not like you were steaming along at 80mph and slid off the road into an oak tree. No. Wait a second. There was that time...

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

The windows have popped out. And that windscreen looks a touch chipped.

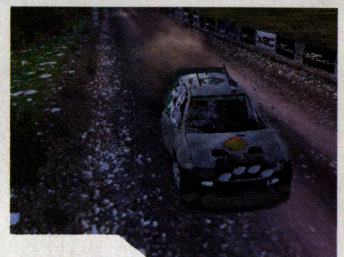


10 MINUTES

After a couple of flips, a few tumbles, several prangs and a sprinkling of light scrapes, your car is worth a tenth of its original asking price. Unlucky. Seriously unlucky.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

All the glass has gone, it's covered in dents and the doors are knackered.



15 MINUTES

Sadly, that's as busted up as it's going to get. We hurl it off clifftops and through ravines, but nothing else is falling off. Bit of a disappointment really.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

The interior light doesn't work and the radio only picks up medium wave.

COLIN McRAE RALLY 04

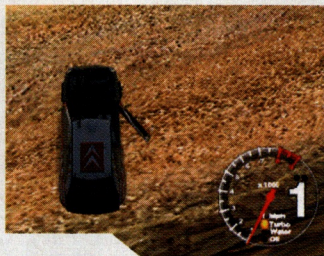


0 MINUTES

What are those blokes looking at? Haven't they ever seen a rally car before? Arseholes. Take a photo, why don't you? It'd last longer. Jesus. Some people.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

There isn't any. The seats are still wrapped in their plastic covers.



5 MINUTES

Changing the CD, talking on your mobile and cradling an open yoghurt with your groin at the same time as driving into a rockface can seriously damage your car.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

You've lost the bonnet, the front bumper and the owner's manual.



10 MINUTES

Oh, this can't be good. Nothing written in a red box with an exclamation mark at the end has ever been good. Why aren't we moving any more?

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

The engine has gone, two of the four tyres are flat and someone's farted.



15 MINUTES

The stage is over. It's taken slightly longer than you would've liked – getting out of ditches when you're engine isn't working is tough – but at least your legs still work.

WHAT'S THE DAMAGE?

All four tyres are blown and one of the hooks on the parcel shelf has come off.

CONCLUSION > So which game lets you do the most damage? *Colin McRae 04* by a country mile. *WRC3*'s cars are much sturdier, able to withstand just about anything.

so you can get on with the driving. Don't. Ignoring *WRC3*'s pre-rally build-up would be like sprinting through the Louvre, past the *Mona Lisa*, past Caravaggio's *Death of the Virgin*, past Charles Cressent's magnificently decadent wall-clock *Love Conquering Time*, to get to a three-inch Blu-Tack sculpture of Richard Blackwood crafted by *The New Adventures of Superman*'s Dean Cain. Everything you could possibly want to know about the upcoming stage is contained within the velvet-lined menu screens before you, from driver profiles and team histories to video fly-overs of the course and simple, large-print set-up options. Best of all, you can explode your car, a function that sends doors, windscreens, wheels and side-panels flying through the ether, as though under the influence of a minor nuclear explosion. And it

"THINK 1980S ROBOT EJECTING KRAFTWORK CD FROM EDDIE MURPHY'S BANG AND OLUFSEN STEREO."

makes a really cool noise. Think 1980s robot ejecting Kraftwerk CD from Eddie Murphy's Bang and Olufsen stereo.

What of the cars? What of them indeed? They look very nice, gathering pretty dirt and dents as you slam them into corners and then back out again. Much like the courses, the presentation (using Primal Scream songs to soundtrack the entire game doesn't hurt) and the graphics, the cars are a several cuts above the usual. In fact, just about everything you can think of receives a thick green tick in the box marked "extraordinary". The multiplayer, the campaign game, the sound, everything. Everything except the replays, which are strangely hollow. Who cares right? You never watch them anyway.

We know exactly what you're going to ask us as we begin to wrap up this review, bearing in mind that the other month we gave *Colin McRae 04* a nine out of ten and that this month we're giving *WRC3* the same score. You're going to ask us if it's possible that there might be a Credible Hulk somewhere in an alternate universe, who stays very calm and who wears Carhartt trousers and has immaculate taste in food, wine and music? The answer is a definite no. And then you're going to ask us, is *WRC3* better than *Colin McRae Rally 04*? To this, our reply is emphatic, delivered with confidence as we bang a fist on

the table. Maybe! The stages are most definitely better, and the official rally licence acquired using money you've donated to Sony over the last eight or so years adds a satisfying real-world twang to the whole thing, but the actual driving – the physics and the damage-modelling and so on – aren't quite up to the high standards of Colin the fourth.

Sorry to sit on the fence here, but ultimately it depends on what you're looking for. *WRC3* is the better looking; *Colin 04* the more realistic. *WRC3* is the more accurate in terms of rally data; *Colin 04* the more challenging in terms of rally driving. Why limit yourself to just one rally game anyway? It's not like you're short of money. And if you are, what were grandmothers invented for? Just tell her you sold a kidney to medical science and that you need to buy it back. *WRC3* – it's better than your family.

/ JON BROWN



PSW VERDICT

UPPERS	DOWNERS
> Amazing courses	> Replays are dull
> Pleading on the eye	> Items pop up
> Ultra-lavish presentation	> Chocolate is bad for you
> Exploding cars	> Office is hot today
GRAPHICS > See! The never-ending countryside	10
SOUNDS > Hear! The throaty warble of a Ford Focus	8
GAMEPLAY > Feel! The best handling this side of <i>McRae</i>	9
OVERALL SCORE Five points for the tracks, three points for the cars and two points for the presentation. Minus one for the lack of either explosions or photon grenades makes nine. Scientific, no?	9



GAME BOY ADVANCE



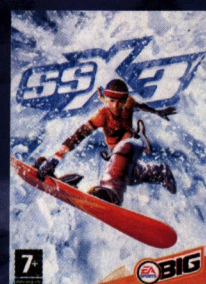
PlayStation 2



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*Boundaries. Bones. Records. Hearts. Boards. Silence.
Egos. Minds. Wind. Laws. All broken.*

*Avalanches. Trees. Competitors. Ravines. Nightmares.
Blizzards. The Mountain. All after you.*



Drop off at
ssx3.co.uk



GIRL FIGHT Stupid bitchiness is especially prevalent amongst girls – in the game. In the game.



CROSS THE BOARDER Slap 'em and they'll hate you....



ALL THE WAY DOWN Any steeper and it'd be falling.



SPECIAL BRANCH The rail's the only way across – ouch!



SSX3

GRAB A BOARD. GRAB A FRIEND. GRAB SOME SKI GOGGLES, BECAUSE WHEN A GAME SHINES THIS BRIGHT, YOU'RE GOING TO NEED THEM.



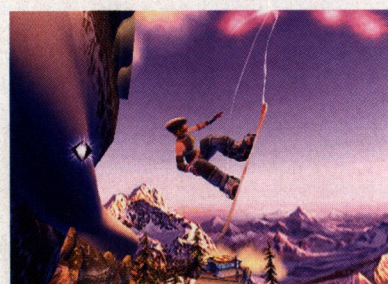
> TYPE	SNOWBOARDING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	EA
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	EA
> ONLINE	NO

YEAH BABY. THAT'S OUR REVIEW OF SSX3.

Yeah baby. There it is again. Because the third episode of EA's snowboard series has still got it. There might not be a huge amount of newness in the snow-filled air, but *SSX3* amps up the excitement level even higher than its top quality older brethren. Don't believe us? Just wait. When you're high up above the mountains, when the air is thin and even the music has faded to a background drone, you'll still get an adrenaline rush like nothing else. And then the second you hit the ground – boomph – the music kicks back in at full volume and you chuckle and say to yourself, whether you want to or not: "Yeah baby." Seriously. You just do.

The gameplay remains the same as before – either pull off tricks for points in Freestyle or Big Air modes, or race against the slope's toughest boarders. But tricking's an integral part of *SSX* racing's appeal, and herein lies the subtle genius of the series. The more tricks you do, the more boost power you get. The more boost power you get, the higher you fly and the more tricks you can do. It means that simply getting down to the

bottom of the slope is by no means enough. You'll have to pull off as huge a combo at every ramp as you can, just to give you enough oomph to blast ahead of the others. It's been done many times before, just never as well. Oh, and now you can Freeride down the entire mountain, facing off the odd challenge and picking up money along the way. Yeah, a bit like *Tony Hawk's*, only not really, as you can't backtrack at all. It's still fun to bomb all the way down the mountain though, after all, what is snowboarding apart from intensely



FLYING HIGH Sufferers from vertigo need not apply to *SSX3*.

choreographed falling?

The snow on its own deserves some kind of Best Inanimate Object in a Video game Oscar. There's piles of it, sucking you under in deep drifts. Skidding you along at breakneck speeds in the form of solid pack-ice. Sprinkling gently over you from the crags as you race underneath. Falling in huge boulders in avalanches in midnight caves. Actually glinting like diamonds in the cold morning sun. It's a testament to how wonderful the snow is that after half an hour you'll rarely notice the myriad effects. This is because they stop being effects: it's just what snow does when you're, you know, out on a snowboard run. Natural is what it is.

SNOW MOTION

And you'll get plenty of chances to look, because some of these races are big. How big? To reach the third peak, there's a race that requires you to complete it in under 19 minutes. That's not a series of laps or anything, oh no. That's straight down the mountain, through the assorted second peak courses, at 90 miles an hour, without a



HIT THE KID Griff the tween isn't even the most annoying. But we still hate him.



WATCH AND LEARN Computer players will trick for speed too. The cheeky scamps.

single break. Which gives you a chance to get to grips with the *über* tricks. Introduced in *SSX Tricky*, they've been superseded by some funky new "super *über*" moves that look the business. *Über* tricks rock. Super *über* tricks rock harder than *The Darkness* covering *Ace of Spades* [see the *Get Über It* box for more details]. *Über. Über, über, über.* We've said it so many times, the word's lost all meaning.

ICICLE RACES

Nothing in life is perfect, and *SSX3* is no different. There's nothing here to convert the [precious few] haters who didn't get on with the first two games. The irritatingly cocky soundbites are back in force, the slopes haven't changed that much and the tricks can occasionally overwhelm. And then there're the boarders, who remain a bunch of



AAAIIIIIIII You'd need nads of steel to do this. Or a lobotomy.

"ÜBER TRICKS ROCK. SUPER ÜBER TRICKS ROCK HARDER THAN THE DARKNESS COVERING ACE OF SPADES."

arseholes. It's an eternal weekend for these sun-kissed, powder-loving skate twats. But as for the lack of changes, well, *SSX* wasn't broke, so we can't really complain if they didn't fix it. *SSX* fans will need to buy this just for the massive new courses, anyway. Perhaps most annoyingly, the free-roaming aspect of the game means you have to follow a branching trail down until you reach your desired course. It's effectively a pointless and lengthy menu system, and will end up adding minutes to your game. We no like.

But the reason *SSX3* is so good has nothing to do with wacky kids, or catchphrases, or tricks. It doesn't even have a lot to do with boarding. It's just that it's full of pure *game*. Nothing gets in the way of you, the gameplay, the speed and the feeling of near-complete control. You'll get more of a kick out of playing *SSX3* than you'll have had since... *SSX Tricky*. Hey, who cares if global warming means this Christmas is sunnier than June in Ibiza? With *SSX3*, you've got all the snow you'll ever need! God, we hate ourselves for writing things like that, but it's true. Leave us to our shame. Leave us now...

/JOFF BROWN

LIKE, GET ÜBER IT!

SOMEHOW THEY'VE MADE THE TRICKS EVEN, WELL... ÜBERER.



>> Build up your trick meter with dull, boring non-*über* tricks so you're ready to pull off a proper *über*trick. Pah. Non-*über*tricks, we hates 'em. We hates 'em forever!



>> Now you can do your crazy thang a hundred feet in the air. The ground shakes, solid diamonds fall from the sky and you'll trigger one letter to be lit in the *Über* meter.



>> Do four *übers* and you'll fill the bar and pull off the... wait for it... super *über*! It's a very fine trick indeed. At this point, we all soiled our pants. Front and back. Seriously.



>> Now you can try and light your super meter. Light it to get... infinite super-boost! Which, to be honest, was a bit of a disappointment. We firmly expected the world to explode.

PSW VERDICT

> UPBERS

- > Glorious snowscapes
- > Near-perfect gameplay
- > Tricking's still fun
- > Courses are amazing

> DOWNERS

- > Menus are annoying
- > Nothing much new here
- > Could have been bigger
- > Boarders get on our tits

GRAPHICS > Stunning snow-vistas, detailed characters

9

SOUNDS > Occasionally old but nicely credible music

7

GAMEPLAY > One more slope... where's my evening gone?

9

OVERALL SCORE

Think the gameplay of *SSX Tricky*, with a few tweaks and some absolutely stunning courses. Think luscious mountains and unbelievable speed. Think *SSX3*. Then buy it.

9

MINI REVIEWS

STILL LOOKING FOR THAT PERFECT PURCHASE TO MAKE YOUR MONTH? SIX MORE GAMES YOU MIGHT LIKE TO CONSIDER...



THE SIMPSONS HIT AND RUN

HOMER BECOMES TOMMY VERCETTI AND HAVOC HITS SPRINGFIELD.

> TYPE	DRIVING
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOVEMBER
> PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	HIGH VOLTAGE
> ONLINE	NO

THE TEMPLATE FOR PREVIOUS SIMPSONS GAMES HAS been simple. The developers find a popular game that the kids like, copy it and insert the most popular animated family in the world. Hence, *Simpsons Road Rage* aped *Crazy Taxi*, while *Simpsons Skateboarding* was a blatant *Tony Hawk*'s rip off. Predictably, both were rubbish.

The next game to be replicated Simpsons-style is *GTA Vice City*. This means Homer drives a pink Cadillac and causes mayhem by stealing school buses, running over innocent pedestrians and popping to the Kwik-E-Mart for a large tub of ice cream. You can steal cars and break things, but the line is drawn when it comes to killing Springfield residents. Citizens bounce off the bonnet of speeding cars rather than ending up in the gutter, yellow limbs twitching like bizarre alien roadkill.

The Simpsons Hit and Run is based around humour rather than violence, so you won't be bumping uglies with hookers in a Duff beer van or murdering Ned Flanders in his back yard. On the bright side, there are appearances from almost every Simpsons character imaginable, including Groundskeeper Willie, Principle Skinner, Comic Book Guy and Cletus. It's possible to recognise the gaudy landmarks of Bart's hometown instantly and you'd have to be a very humourless person indeed not to smirk at the sight of Homer heading to Springfield High with Lisa's missing lunch wearing nothing but a pair of Y-Fronts.

Despite boring training levels, *The Simpsons Hit and Run* is a genuinely amusing game. To many, this will never amount to anything more than just another average *GTA Vice City* clone, but fans of show will love it.
/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

Easily the best *Simpsons* game so far, but that's hardly a great achievement. You should only really give this consideration if you're a *huuuuge* fan of the TV series.

6



SUPER FARM

THE BATTERY CHICKENS WANT A FIGHT WITH THE ORGANIC COWS.

> TYPE	ACTION
> PLAYERS	1-4
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	IGNITION
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	ASOBO
> ONLINE	NO

BACK IN THE 80S, GAMES WERE SIMPLE AFFAIRS.

UK developers thought they could produce a really basic game, then make it a classic by adding a multiplayer mode. It was thought at the time that a bad game instantly became a good game when played with friends. The redneck hicks behind *Super Farm* apparently still believe this to be the case. They're wrong.

Once you've picked a cow, rabbit or pig, it's time to head to one of the remarkably similar farmyard settings, pick up whatever weapon is handy and attack the rival players. Aside from some novel electric fences to play with and a cow that propels players to the other side of each arena, that's basically the entire game in a nutshell. While hitting animals exhibiting BSE-levels of craziness until they stop moving is funny the first time, it doesn't remain entertaining for more than 60 seconds.

Amazingly there's nothing more to *Super Farm* than this. The lack of variation between levels is shocking and after 20 minutes' play you're likely to have discovered everything the game has to offer. Needless to say, you'll have played more complex and involving games on your mobile phone. They couldn't even get the name right. Imagine the sniggers if you went to Woolworths to ask for a copy. Frankly, it doesn't even bear thinking about.

There's a very good reason why *Super Farm* finds itself cut adrift out here, in the murky backwater of the magazine. And that's because it's a game we're embarrassed to have on PS2. Help us to keep it a secret by denying all knowledge of the existence of *Super Farm* from this day forth. Starting from... now.

/ RICHARD MELVILLE

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

Hideosly basic melee combat without an ounce of originality or fun. You would have more fun sharing a farm yard with a randy bull while walking on crutches.

2



ROLLING

HEY DUDE, HAS THIS GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH FRED DURST?

> TYPE	IN-LINE SKATING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	SCI
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	RAGE
> ONLINE	NO

NO MATTER WHAT YOUR GAMING PREFERENCE, YOU

can't deny that the *Tony Hawk* series is one of the best extreme sports experiences to be had on PlayStation2. Whether you bemoan the baggy Limp Bizkit skater midgets who terrorise Tesco car parks or happen to be one of them, video game skating simply rocks. Or at least it did before *Rolling* limped into view.

Almost every aspect of *Rolling* has been culled directly from the *Tony Hawk* series, from the skate park editor to the tricks, the challenges and the options to customise your skater. In fact, the only thing that's missing is the skateboard, which is where the problems start. Because *Rolling* is actually based on inline skating as opposed to the infinitely more popular/cooler/appealing discipline favoured by Tony Hawk and his purple-kneed friends.

Not only is inline skating terribly uncool, it's also a bitch to simulate, as *Rolling* demonstrates through its thorough bastardisation of the *Tony Hawk 4* control interface. It's difficult to turn at speed and, because the environments are small and cluttered, there are more than a few embarrassing moments when you run headlong into a wall, making *Rolling* feel like a special (and we mean special as in 'special bus') skate edition of *Jackass*. It's also tricky to predict exactly where your skater is going to land after a huge leap, leading to more yet more needless blood spillage and frustration. In a final bid to make rollerskates seem cool, *Rolling* includes a huge amount of licensed gear and a soundtrack featuring everything from The Hives to Public Enemy. Neither of whom has ever worn rollerskates. Totally clueless.

/ JOFF BROWN

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

Flawed controls spoil this below average *Tony Hawk* clone. Grubby visuals and a complete lack of originality don't really help either. Wait for *Tony Hawks' Underground*.

4

PLATINUM



GALLOP RACER: AT THE RACES

THE JAPANESE LOVE THEIR HORSE RIDING GAMES. WE'RE NOT JAPANESE.

> TYPE	HORSE RIDING
> PLAYERS	1-2
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	ZOO
> PRICE	£39.99
> DEVELOPER	TECMO
> ONLINE	NO

AS A BIZARRE SIDELINE TO THEIR BIG BREASTED

Dead or Alive fighting series, developer Tecmo has found massive success in its native Japan with the *Gallop Racer* series. Swapping norks for nags, however, has presented several problems outside of a nation obsessed with horse racing. How can Tecmo expect legions of testosterone-fuelled fight fans to switch from slapping big jugged beauties to strategically racing horses?

Here's how this incredibly bizarre experience begins: Visions of a live action tutorial featuring a busty instructor in rose pink lycra fade out to make way for a cartoon horse and details the basics of a race. What you soon discover is that if you try to race a horse like you would a Subaru Impreza in *Gran Turismo* you'll lose, for despite first appearances this is actually a very complex game. Aside from the fact that each race has three stages, each requiring a new control method, there are several factors that need monitoring constantly. "Is he happier at the front or the back of the pack?", "How hard can I whip him?" and "Is he getting angry?" are all valid questions.

In the same way that *Gran Turismo* is the king of car racers, *Gallop Racer* is undoubtedly the best horse racer around. In essence, it's an accurate simulation of the sport of kings with random bits of Japanese randomness inserted just for a laugh. But who will buy it? Certainly not the nicotine riddled stinky tramps that hang around Ladbrokes. Even the most naïve gamer would find it difficult to pay £40 for a game based around horse racing. That's £20 that could be spent on Flying Fancy at Newbury and £20 that could be spent down the Dog & Duck.

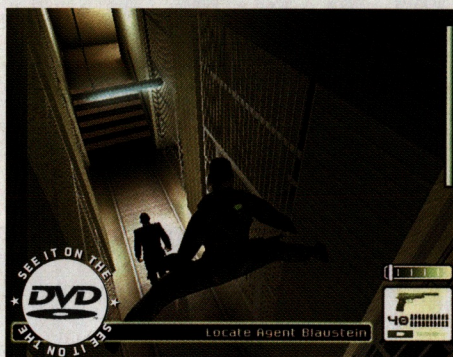
/ RICHARD MELVILLE

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

If you happen to be in the hideously small minority that would like a horse race simulator, buy this and please stop reading PSW. Your sort aren't welcome here.

6



SPLINTER CELL



THAT FAMOUS XBOX EXCLUSIVE. ON PS2. FOR A SECOND TIME.

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
> PRICE	£19.99
> DEVELOPER	UBI SOFT
> ONLINE	NO

WHAT A GRAND TIME OF IT SUPER STEALTH HERO SAM

Fisher has had in the past year. First of all, his agent secures a big-money transfer from Xbox over to the PS2 so he can become a proper celebrity rather than just a cult figure forever on the fringes of the A-list ("Sam who? Sorry mate. Your name's not on the list. You're not coming in") and then, as if by magic, he becomes a PSW cover star and never looks back. Jennifer Lopez can only dream of such stardom. To cement his title as the next best stealth agent after Solid Snake, Sam Fisher's *Splinter Cell* is to be released as part of the cheapo Platinum range.

For those of you who missed it first time around, *Splinter Cell* is based on traditional hide-and-sneak principles. There's a massive amount of secret gadgets to help you kill people in complete silence, including a wire-based optical camera which can be passed underneath closed doors to show who is in the room or, indeed, who is in the toilet cubicle next to you. Another camera device is the a sticky cam, which can be placed anywhere within a level to transmit images back to you. OK, so the gadgets might not sound that exciting, but when faced with a gang of trained killers, you'll get the biggest feeling of satisfaction. Likewise, Sam's own abilities are pretty cool. This man can do the splits in mid-air for Christ's sake!

Splinter Cell is designed for people who want a military-style action game without all the strategic hang ups of a team-based tactical shooter. Hence you get best of both worlds - the chance to shoot people in the back of the head and the opportunity to swing around like Spider-man in a pole dancing club. Essential.

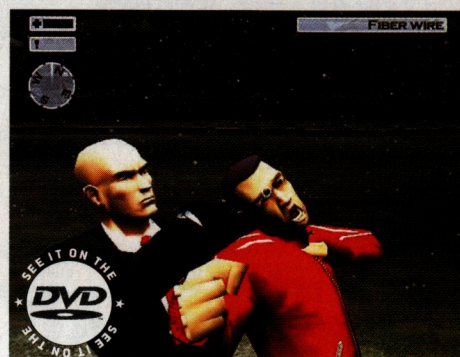
/ JONATHAN TODD

PSW VERDICT

OVERALL SCORE

Metal Gear Solid 2 is better, but *Splinter Cell* is a classic stealth game, which brings enough new tricks to the table to make it an essential purchase.

9



HITMAN 2

HE LOST HIS LIFE TO CRIME AND HIS HAIR TO OLD AGE. POOR BUGGER.

> TYPE	ACTION ADVENTURE
> PLAYERS	1
> OUT	NOW
> PUBLISHER	EIDOS
> PRICE	£19.99
> DEVELOPER	IO
> ONLINE	NO

THE LIFE OF A HITMAN IS OFTEN GLAMORISED WHEN,

in truth, it's probably a miserable, dangerous and unrewarding career. *Hitman 2* isn't any of the above, offering sniping fans a chance to get their kicks by indulging in their most illegal fantasies. Despite looking like a bouncer from a meat-market nightclub in the provinces, the balding, genetically-enhanced hitman you play is as hard as nails. He doesn't even have a name, choosing to adopt the mysterious moniker Codename 47.

Each level gives you a dossier which, predictably, includes holiday snaps of the evil mafia don that you need to whack. Killing innocent people is frowned upon while silently disabling people via chloroform, darts and stun guns is praised in the caring world of *Hitman 2*. When a final target is reached, it's time to kill using proper firepower rather than trying to strangle a lardy kinpin with your piano wire. A choice of assault rifles, grenades and times bombs are available for the final kill of each mission.

During the first few attempts you'll accidentally shoot an innocent, make a noise or be spotted by the enemy and be shot instantly. Rather than certain death, being caught presents you with a number of options: run, starting shooting or grab a disguise. As if killing your target without leaving a trace wasn't challenge enough, later levels feature a rival killer sent, Terminator-style, to kill you. Rather than feeling safe while sitting in a sniping hideout, there's always the feeling that someone is out to get you. Suffice to say, if you've ever spent an balmy evening in *Vice City* sniping innocent motorists as they pass, cackling with glee as their heads explode, *Hitman 2* is the game for you.

/ JON BROWN

PSW VERDICT

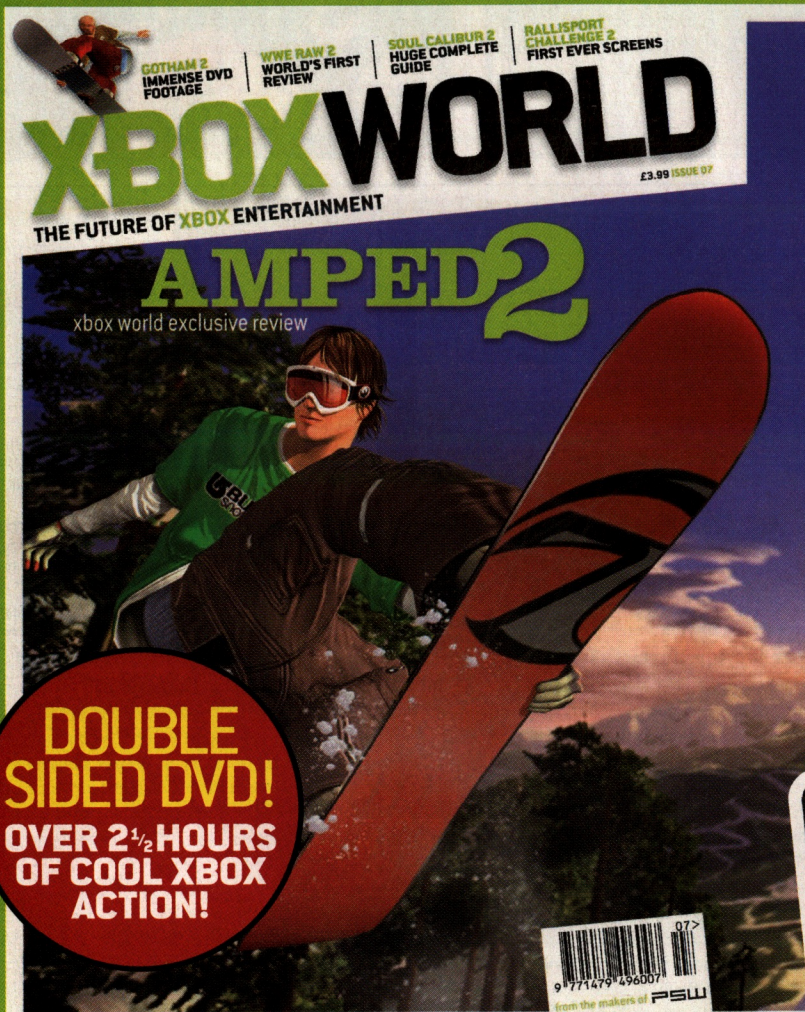
OVERALL SCORE

A original concept made even better by strategy elements that provide a welcome break from no-brainer blasters. A thrifty purchase for wannabe snipers.

8

NOW WITH WINGS

LOOK! IT'S GOT A GATEFOLD* COVER FOR GOD'S SAKE!



PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2

SEE IT FIRST ON THE XBOX WORLD DVD!

FULL DVD GAME!

PLAY THE CLASSIC SPACE ACE NOW!

ALL THIS, PLUS:

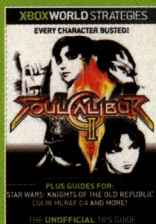
- ★ FREE 100 PAGE TIPS BOOK
- ★ FREE FIFA 2004 MINI-MAG
- ★ SOME JOKES (FUNNY ONES)
- ★ A GREAT ARSE ON PAGE 4
- ★ THE WORLD'S BEST XBOX MAG



★ PROJECT GOTHAM 2!



★ DON BLUTH'S SPACE ACE!



★ TIPS BOOK!



ISSUE 7 ON SALE NOW

FROM THE MAKERS OF PSW

*You know, when the cover opens out with a big extra flap, like trendy magazines do sometimes.

BROWSER

FONDLE OUR REAR END.



098

DVD REVIEWS

>> X appeal. X-rated. The X factor. Just three of the puns which didn't make the final cut of our X2 review.

103

DIARY



>> In this month's foul-smelling episode: Rich hits the skids after a night spent filling his hamster-like cheeks with caviar, while Nutter skateboards at a very low speed down a slight incline. Don't miss it.

104

TALKBACK



>> "Hi Trish. I'm Jon Brown from PSW. No, PSW. P for Percy, S for sugar, W for 'Will you please be my mummy?' No, not you. I didn't mean you. OK then, I did mean you. Perhaps I can just sit on your lap? No?"

107

FORWARD PLANNER



>> A Jehovah's Witness friend recently gave us an inside tip on this end of the world thing. We're saying nothing (apart from that it might be wise to withdraw your savings and to start praying monkishly).

108

UPGRADE



>> If this writer had his way, *Upgrade* would be full of items from the *Innovations* catalogue. Like the Aroma Snoozer, an inflatable travel pillow with an aromatherapy dispenser that soothes as you snooze. Yikes.

110

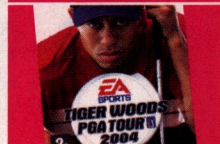
YOUR DVD



>> PSW was the first PS2 magazine to bring you a regular DVD. That was three years ago people, and the rest are still playing catch up! They'll crap when they see what we've got for you on this month's DVD. Oh yes.

112

ESSENTIAL 50



>> PSW's little black book containing the names and numbers of 50 of the hottest, dirtiest young things around, all of whom are gagging for a good fumble. Tell them PSW sent you to receive your 10% discount.



X2

CHARLES XAVIER LEADS HIS MUTANTS BACK INTO BATTLE FOR A MOVIE THAT IMPROVES OVER ITS PREDECESSOR IN EVERY WAY IMAGINABLE.

DISC INFO

- > **Starring**
Patrick Stewart,
Brian Cox, Ian McKellen,
Hugh Jackman
- > **Director**
Bryan Singer
- > **Year** 2002
- > **Price** £22.99
- > **Released** Out now

When Magneto (McKellen), the villain in the original movie, is neutered early on, left to rot Blaine-style in a large Perspex cage *sans* nappy, we find ourselves in desperate need of an enemy significant enough to furrow the collected brow of our amazing X-Men. Wait a second. Was that a knock at the door? Why it's the entire American government, who've been led by the nose to Charles Xavier's School for the Gifted by William Stryker (Cox), a deceitful military man with the ear of the president and a burning hatred for all things mutant. His invasion of the X-Men's mansion forms the second of the three bang-on-the-money action sequences in X2, the first coming in the opening reel with Nightcrawler's infiltration of the White House, the third in the final reel as our heroes flee Stryker's base. So before you ask, yes, X2 does finally deliver the all-important kapow!!! promised in part one that never actually materialised. To wit, the action sequences hit hard and often.

Soon, Charles Xavier (Stewart) has been kidnapped (well, wheeled off at least) and Magneto has broken free, leading him to forge a temporary alliance with the remaining X-Men in

the interests of preserving mutantkind. You're right. It probably is a couple of notches more serious than it should be. But it looks nice, thespio heavyweights Stewart and McKellen bookend a spread of solid performances and the splintering storylines converge pleasingly with around a quarter of the film to go.

And then X2 runs into turbulence. For director Singer is guilty of wringing the emotional climax for slightly more than it's worth, needlessly drawing out the conclusion to a movie that up until this point has jogged determinedly without pausing for breath. Your interest may wane late on, but the thrills administered by Wolverine and Nightcrawler early on should see you through.

EXTRAS (In the voice of *Bullseye's* Tony Green. Why? Because we can) On the first disc: two separate commentary tracks, one by the director, another by a collection of individuals we've never heard of. On the second disc: a Nightcrawler featurette, a making-of and a look at the stunts.

VERDICT A bolder, more intelligent movie than the first with bigger, brighter explosions. So give 20th Century Fox your money. Go on.

★★★★★ Jon Brown

COMIC TIMING

DIARIES AT THE READY. THE NEXT WAVE OF MARVEL MOVIES IS INCOMING.

SPIDER-MAN 2

With filming complete, all that remains is for the SFX monkeys to fanny around with their Wigan-sized super-computers. Dr Octopus is the lead villain this time around, though the Lizard pops up too.

ETA: SUMMER 2004



X-MEN 3

Inevitable after the huge success of X2. McKellen is interested, and director Singer seems sure to return, but what of Halle Berry, who moaned and sulked through filming? Storm in a teacup?

ETA: SUMMER 2006



THE FANTASTIC FOUR

After years of speculation, it would appear that The Fantastic Four movie is finally going ahead. As yet, no actors or directors are attached, but internet rumours suggest work will begin this month.

ETA: CHRISTMAS 2004





WELCOME TO COLLINWOOD

Starring Sam Rockwell Director Anthony and Joe Russo Year 2002 Price £19.99 Released Out now

If the Coen brothers were a little bit shit, *Welcome to Collinwood* is the movie they would make. All the pieces are in place (setting borrowed from *The Man Who Wasn't There*, stupid central characters chasing free money on loan from *O Brother Where Art Thou?*, studied quirkiness stolen from *Barton Fink*), it's just that they don't fit together. It tells of Pero (Rockwell), a hapless wrong 'un who attempts to lead a band of crooks to the promised land via a wealthy shylock's safe. Ultimately, *Collinwood* can't find an answer to the eternal question "So frickin' what?". It's hard to care about this gang of featureless hoons and their tuppenny heist, which is neither particularly imaginative nor especially daring.

EXTRAS An uncensored 'mockumentary' and a guide to the movie's slang.

VERDICT "I saw a bloke who looked a bit like Joe Pasquale on the train this morning." "So frickin' what?" That's what watching *Collinwood* is like.

★★★★★ Jon Brown



FINAL DESTINATION 2

Starring Ali Larter Director David R. Ellis Year 2002 Price £19.99 Released Out now

Death, the man in the black hood currently necking Tizer at the bar with his nephews Famine and Disease, is no two-bit schmuck. Miss your appointment with him, hit the cosmic snooze button that buys you a couple more days, and you'll pay the penalty by suffering a cruel and unusual ending far more painful than anything God originally had in mind. We all know this because we've seen *Final Destination 2*.

It begins with another accident – road not air this time – and another selection of survivors who were pencilled in for a 9.30am with the fourth horseman of the apocalypse but overslept. A parade of deaths calculated using the equation hurt x ridiculousness ensues, much to our delight. Problems only arise when attempts are made to use the logic of the first movie to explain the second. Like we care.

EXTRAS A director's commentary and some deleted scenes.

VERDICT Slightly better than you might have thought. Just slightly.

★★★★★ Jon Brown



2 FAST 2 FURIOUS

EVEN WITHOUT THE SICKENING SMELL OF DIESEL, PART TWO STILL CAN'T FIND TOP GEAR.



Starring Paul Walker, Tyrese, Cole Hauser, Ludacris Director John Singleton Year 2002 Price £19.99 Released Out now

Once upon a time, a PSW reviewer with a habit of starting his reviews with nursery rhyme clichés saw the opening ten minutes of the movie *The Fast and the Furious* and no more. The DVD was scratched and he couldn't be bothered to walk back down to Blockbuster. So it was that the film became frozen in his mind, a pure shot of excitement, speed and sub-*Top Gun* 'My dick's bigger than your dick – and substantially wider' dialogue that he found remarkably palatable. "Hmm," he thought to himself as he ejected the disc from the player, "That must have been one hell of a movie."

It wasn't. He knows this only now he's suffered a headlong collision with its sequel, *2 Fast 2 Furious*. As with the original, the opening chunk slides down at breakneck speed, an introductory thrust so staggeringly quick it leaves you Bruno-like and excitable. Again, it begins with a car-ornographic street race, the cameras caressing the motors with probing fingers until the excitement becomes too much and they shoot off in search of orgasm. Then the Nissans and Mitsubishis take a back seat as Story and Character, two extremely reluctant participants, are shoved into the spotlight to mumble and look at their shoes. So it is that the

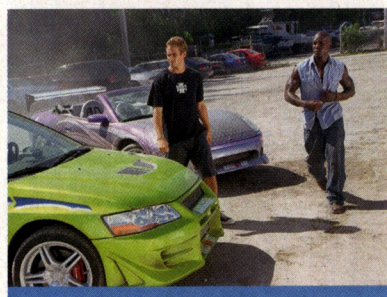
second film, much like the first, would be twice as good if it was half as long. Actually, not even half. Just race up to the end of the first car chase, then fade to black and roll credits. Because everything after that is either guff or waffle. Or a combination of both.

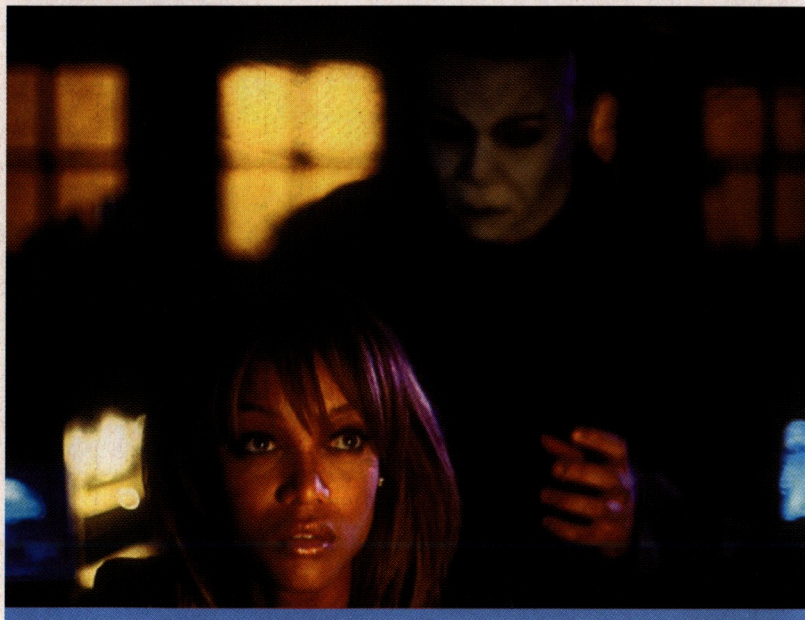
Guff: the plotline, which has former undercover cop Brian O'Connor (Walker) worming his way in to the inner sanctum of a gang of drugs dealers on the promise that, if he brings them down, the authorities will clear his criminal record. Waffle: almost every word dribbled out in every scene that Walker shares with co-star Tyrese, a man with whom he seems to have absolutely nothing in common. Guff and waffle: the final ten minutes, the needless pretty girl subplot and the hazy chase sequences found somewhere in *2 Fast's* messy middle.

EXTRAS Deleted scenes (and you have no idea how bad they are), an audio commentary and a surprisingly interesting examination of the stunt work involved in the car scenes.

VERDICT Could've been worse. At least Vin Diesel isn't in it. He had better things to do. Let's hope they involved flammable liquids, naked flames and locked doors.

★★★★★ Jon Brown





HALLOWEEN: RESURRECTION



THE FINAL NAIL HAS BEEN HAMMERED INTO MICHAEL MYER'S COFFIN. CAN WE LET HIM IN REST IN PEACE NOW?

Starring Bianca Kajlich, Busta Rhymes, Jamie Lee Curtis **Director** Rick Rosenthal **Year** 2002 **Price** £17.99 **Released** Out Now

There's a difference between being resurrected and having your flesh-raped carcass hauled from the grave to be paraded, *Weekend At Bernie's* style, through the streets like a giant, rotting puppet. A subtle difference, but it's there. Had someone taken the time to explain this to the people behind *Halloween: Resurrection* we might've been spared the horrifying sight of the corpse of Michael Myers being publicly widdled over. Sadly not.

The gubbins: six high-school teens are invited to spend Halloween in the childhood home of notorious killer Michael Myers (Brad Loree) for a national TV show. Each of the housemates is given a camera and asked to rummage around for clues as to what could have sent Myers cuckoo while hundreds of punters look on. *Big Brother* meets *Halloween* meets the internet? Mmmm. Microwaved zeitgeist! Smells good! Tastes like warmed-over puke. Myers returns home to find that his house has been turned into I'm A Little-Known American Teenage Actor, Get Me Out Of Here! and makes it his business to sneak up on the prying youths when they least expect it, before stabbing them and waddlin' off.

There's more than a hint of *Scooby Doo* about the whole thing, particularly wherever the over-animated Busta Rhymes is involved.

The main problem with *Resurrection* is that Myers just isn't scary anymore. Instead of screaming when he makes an entrance, you groan. His blank expression, the very same stonewall stare that once seemed so horrifying, now looks like the face of a grumpy old man who wants nothing more than for all these young upstarts to bugger off and leave him to die in peace. Then there's the ridiculous opening half hour, which shamefacedly pilfers from *Terminator 2*, the nonsensical plot, which allows dozens of deaths to be either missed or ignored, and the ending, which regrettably leaves the franchise open for another run-out. A complete bloody nightmare, just not in a good way.

EXTRAS Those who wish to pick at the bones of *Resurrection* can listen to an audio commentary and tour the set with the production designer.

VERDICT Teen horror sir? Then go with *Final Destination 2*. Because *Halloween: Resurrection* drags like a dead fat guy.

★★★★★ Jon Brown



AUTO FOCUS

Starring Greg Kinnear **Director** Paul Schrader **Year** 2002 **Price** £19.99 **Released** Out now

Bob Crane [Kinnear] was a complete disgrace. He died at 49, a once-fondly remembered TV star whose modest career had been completely overshadowed by his addictions to masturbating, fornicating and video-taping himself while masturbating and fornicating. His downfall, we are shown in *Auto Focus*, was precipitated by an introduction techno-freak and fellow orgasm addict John Carpenter [Willem Dafoe]. It's a meeting of two [dirty] minds [down a piss-stained alleyway in a red-light area] that leads Crane to cut an oiled-up, semi-erect swathe through the female population of Los Angeles. Crane provides the flange – and by flange, we mean girls – Carpenter provides the technology necessary to make the historical document. Paul Schrader's account of all this is suitably grubby. And yes, you can knock one off to it. Mmm yeah.

EXTRAS Three commentaries and a 50-minute documentary.

VERDICT Like *Sex Truck Vol 6*, is as sordid and as it is compelling.

★★★★★ Jon Brown



EQUILIBRIUM

Starring Christian Bale **Director** Kurt Wimmer **Year** 2002 **Price** £17.99 **Released** Out now

In *Equilibrium*'s future state, a place where [you imagine] hobos with laser eyes stand around burning braziers moaning about how things turned out exactly as Hollywood film-makers said they would, citizens are force-fed a daily diet of sedatives to prevent them from noticing that they lead dull, unfulfilling lives in a dull, unfulfilling society. At its centre is Father, an anonymous god figure. To the left of him and down a bit is Christian Bale, an enforcer who stops taking his tablets one day and begins rebelling against the system. He does this by pretending to be in *The Matrix*, by pulling out his guns while running really slowly and shooting. Unfortunately by the time he gets round to it you've long since started reading an article on Geri Halliwell's giant boobs in *Heat* magazine while clipping your toenails.

EXTRAS A director's commentary and a dissection of the fight scenes.

VERDICT Bring on the right-wing monotheocratic future state.

★★★★★ Jon Brown

beyond FILM

SHORT. CONCENTRATION.
SPAN? TROUBLE. DIGESTING.
INFORMATION. NOT. IN.
MOUTH. SIZED. CHUNKS?
THESE. ARE. FOR. YOU.



PHOENIX NIGHTS SERIES 2 £19.99

In which Brian Potter, Ironicide of clubland, attempts to salvage something from the ashes of his business, which burnt down at the end of series one. So it is that the *Phoenix Club* rises again to play host to yet more shit ideas half-cooked up by the owner and his team of cronies. The pick of the episodes – five of six – has Potter stuck in his stairlift during a powercut. "What would Thora Hird do?" he wonders to himself. Obviously this made sense when she was still alive. Nowadays she doesn't have much need for low-voltage motorised transportation. She's carried around heaven on the wings of angels. Even still, it made us laugh. Also included: a selection of outtakes collected together under the ingenious heading 'It'll be alright on the Phoenix Nights 2', Brian Potter's appearance on *Comic Relief* and a full cast commentary on all six episodes. Buy me.

★★★★★

THE OFFICE SERIES 2 £19.99

The uncomfortable truth at the heart of *The Office* is that we're all David Brent. Even us media types, who come to work in jeans to brag about our highly-acute senses of irony. Just last week a member of staff was spotted swinging an imaginary golf club through the air as he stood talking about cars. So you won't catch us looking down our noses at Mr Brent. To us he's like an old friend.

The second series has Brent's (Ricky Gervais) quiet resentment

towards Neil (Patrick Baladi), his better-looking, funnier, more popular superior, bubbling over, this desperation to be liked leading him into ever-more ridiculous situations. It all ends on an incredible low. Brent's exit is several degrees less dignified than Elvis Presley's, quite something when you consider the King died on the crapper with tears of constipation? cascading onto his meaty thighs. It's the perfect conclusion to a near-perfect sit-com. Let's just hope they have the good sense to leave it at that.

★★★★★

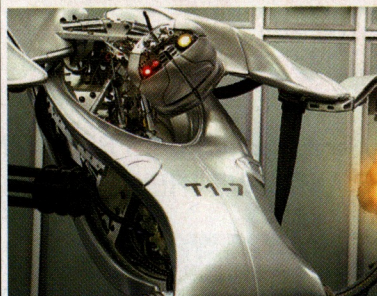
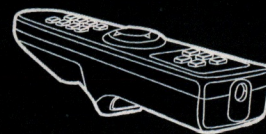
THE NAKED £15.99

The Naked takes place in an office peopled by flabby, stretched exhibitionists who go about their daily business with their underbits completely unencumbered. No reference is ever made to their nakedness (as the strapline so brilliantly puts it, "They don't f*** – this is a psychological film"), instead they bicker about who makes the coffee, bitch about absent colleagues and freely break wind. Just another day on the job. If there is anything to be learnt from this slightly repulsive parade of ugly foreigners in the buff it's this: naked on its own is not erotic. In fact it's pretty disgusting. Only when combined with other activities – naked cuddling: good, naked trampolining: good, naked sleeping: bad, naked typing: worse – can nudity arouse. Still, it is funny.

★★★★★

DVDEXTRAS

240 VOLTS OF THE LATEST DVD NEWS.



RISE AND SHINE

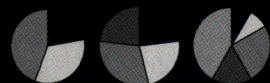
The DVD release of *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* will feature a second disc housing 13 featurettes. As well as fully profiling Arnie, the mini-documentaries also examine the costume design, the special effects, the video game, the spin-off toys and the stunt work involved in the car chase, by far the most spectacular sequence in the entire *Terminator* trilogy. Elsewhere, Schwarzenegger and director Jonathan Mostow chew the fat over the course of an audio commentary, a blooper reel shows off the giant Austrian's lighter side and a handful of deleted scenes fill in the blanks left by Mostow's explosion-centric approach to film-making. Look for *Rise of the Machines* on DVD around the end of November.



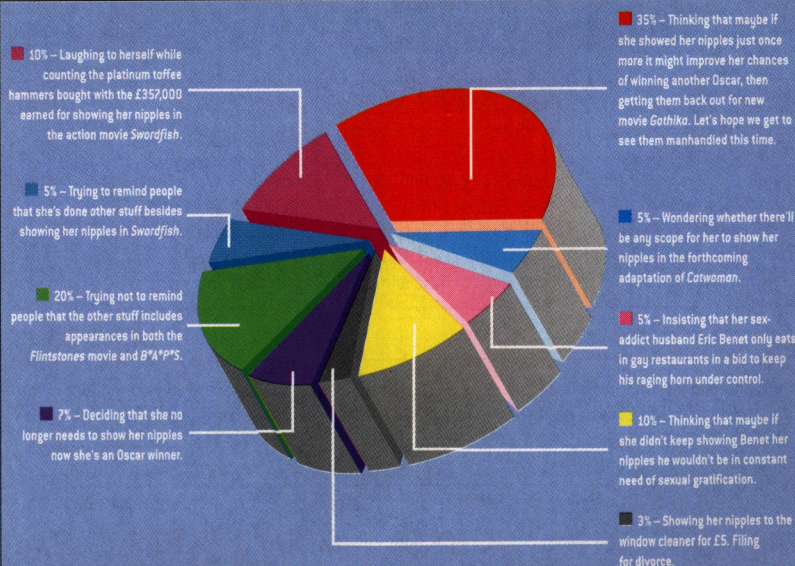
A PROPER CHARLIE

Charlie's Angels 2 wasn't a great film. It wasn't even a good one. But it did have Cameron Diaz, and Cameron Diaz didn't have much on. From that perspective, it was extremely hard to argue with. Which is why we're more excited than we probably should be about the DVD release of *Full Throttle*, expected to hit shelves on the November 17. So much so that we had to physically restrain ourselves from using the headline 'Angel Delight'. That's how big it is. The list of bonus material in full: a director's commentary, a writer's commentary (surely the most redundant thing ever?), a featurette on the cars, another on the motocross sequence, another on the fight training undertaken by the stars and eight Easter eggs.

CHART ACT



THE LIFE OF X2 STAR HALLE BERRY IN A PIE.



BACK2BACK

DID YOU DIE IN 1934? WERE YOU CRYOGENICALLY FROZEN IN THE HOPE THAT SCIENTISTS WOULD FIND A WAY TO BRING YOU BACK TO LIFE? AND HAVE THEY? YES? THEN YOU'LL NEED THESE. YOU'VE MISSED A LOT.



ISSUE #36

The best fighting game ever made? Find out on the DVD with exclusive footage of *Mortal Kombat*. We've also an in-depth look at *MGS 2*.



ISSUE #37

A massive first look at the disturbed *Silent Hill 3* is bodybagged in the mag and on the DVD, alongside our essential *GTA Vice City* guide.



ISSUE #38

We take an exclusive look at *Driver 3*, *Splinter Cell*, *Virtua Fighter 4 Evolution* and *Mace Griffin*, plus there's *Devil May Cry 2* on the DVD!



ISSUE #39

Highlights include the exclusive review of *Devil May Cry 2*, new pics and info for *Silent Hill 3*, and amazing DVD footage of *Resident Evil Outbreak!*



ISSUE #40

Will *Soul Calibur 2* be the best thing since sliced Marmite? Our exclusive preview is joined by the equally massive *Enter The Matrix* on the DVD.



ISSUE #41

Hulk is exclusively unveiled and PSW unleashes the first ever footage of *Destruction Derby Arenas* and *Onimusha 3*. Cripes!



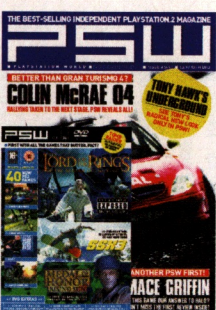
ISSUE #42

An avalanche of quality gaming includes the world's first look at *SSX3*, plus exclusive first footage of *Hulk*, *Alias* and *Jak II: Renegade*.



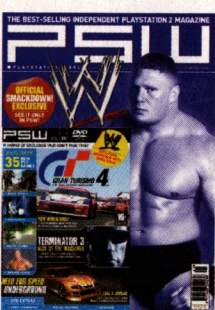
ISSUE #43

The *Metal Gear Solid 3* trailer in top quality, plus over 70 new games including *Gran Turismo 4*, *Resident Evil Outbreak* and *Sonic's* PS2 debut.



ISSUE #44

Colin McRae Rally 04, first ever shots of *Tony Hawk's Underground*, *Terminator 3*, exclusive *Mace Griffin* review, *Buff* and tons more.



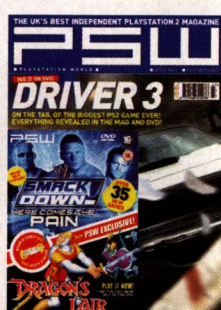
ISSUE #45

The world's first ever look at *WWE SmackDown! 5*, plus 15 MINUTES of astonishing new *GRAN TURISMO 4* footage on the action packed DVD.



ISSUE #46

PSW tinkers under the hood of *GT4*, bringing you brand-new pics, info and footage! Plus there's *Medal of Honor* and *WWE SmackDown!* on the DVD.



ISSUE #47

Driver 3 exposed, *Soul Calibur 2* cracked and a free game on the DVD! What game? *Dragon's Lair*! From 1983! Better ask your dad about it.

Just phone our hotline now on **01858 438825**, or send a cheque for the correct amount made payable to Computec Media, to the following address. Be sure to include details of which back issues you require. PSW SUBSCRIPTIONS, TOWER HOUSE, SOVEREIGN PARK, MARKET HARBOUROUGH, LEICESTERSHIRE, LE16 9EF.

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THEY'RE GOING FAST! – CALL 01858 438825

JOURNAL'S END

A month in the life of your favourite PS2 magazine.

Day 1 — Joff Brown and Rich Melville take part in their first Bra and Panties match on *WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain*. The pair shuffle uncomfortably for the duration of the bout, neither man sufficiently at home with his constantly shifting sexuality to confess that he secretly finds the thought of ripping through a colleague's undergarments thrillingly repulsive. Joff eventually wins, but is overcome by the sheer force of the electrifying sexual undercurrent and flees the room in floods of tears. They never speak of the match-up again and now find direct eye contact impossible.

Day 4 — Lee skates down a small hill on Jon Brown's Super Tiger skateboard, somehow managing to look completely physically disabled despite the fact that he's standing bolt upright at the time. He feels strangely proud of himself.

Day 5 — Lee drives over Jon Brown's skateboard in his girlfriend's car in an effort to break it in half. He fails. Brown then leaps on it in anger and snaps it clean in two. Nothing is said. Nothing needs to be said. The implication is clear:

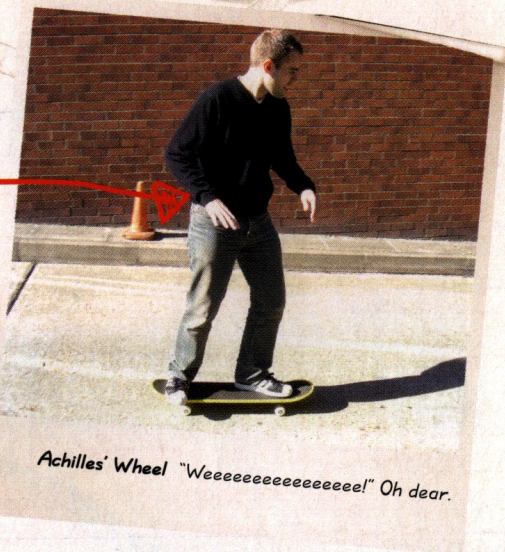
Jon Brown weighs more than a 1.3l family hatchback. While down in the car-park, Lee plays with a tennis ball pulled from a drain with a pair of pliers, before realising that this is the kind of thing that gypsies do when they're not busy setting fire to mattresses or rummaging through skips with their shirts off looking for horseshoes and treasure maps.

Day 10 — Joff is overheard telling an unknown PR person who has phoned the office in an attempt to get her product into the magazine: "Yes, we like cheese, but we're a games magazine." The quote rapidly goes down in PSW lore.

Day 15 — Rich takes part in tournament to promote the release of *FIFA 2004*. While in the company of senior Electronic Arts representatives, Rich sticks to the shadows, hoping beyond hope that no one present has had the chance to read his bum-raping review of their latest release, *Rugby 2004*. He gets knocked out of the competition in the second round and leaves swiftly with a pocket full of canapés and a slight feeling of guilt for having savagely bitten at the hand that has so lavishly fed him. Later, as he sits hunched on the crapper, bracing himself as his shaking bottom vomits gallons of unprocessed duck liver pâté into the pan with the force of an angry volcano, he finds that his feelings of guilt can be effortlessly washed away. Which is more than can be said for his remnants of his dinner. Thankfully it's nothing that a few dabs of Tip-Ex can't fix.

Day 24 — Rich goes down in history as the first man ever to blame the new throw-ins in *PES3* for his appalling form. Though the throws are admittedly dodgy, the PSW team find it hard to sympathise with a man who once thought that aggregate was a type of playing surface (similar to Astroturf, or so Melville's spastic logic would have you believe) and who constantly shouts at his "goalstopper" to "catch the flippin' soccer" in the manner of a well-meaning mother watching her embarrassed son play for the school team.

Day 30 — "Can we go home now?" the PSW team ask Lee in unison. Lee replies by doing that. "Fine. Just go. It's fine. (Mumbles to self)," thing that girls occasionally do, actually meaning, "No, that isn't fine, but I'm going to tell you that it is and then correct all your mistakes myself to make you feel bad." The team fail to realise this and skip all the way home.



Achilles' Wheel "Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!" Oh dear.



Shut that door Melville downloads the brownware.



BOBBY BALL

FREE SEX
PHONE
8138150
ASK 4 DAVE





"I thank my lucky stars that I was competing in a women's title match in my hometown. That was my moment, coming out with a maple leaf on my butt. I'm proud to be Canadian and I'm proud of my hometown."



Talkback with



Trish Stratus

She wanted to be a doctor and help old ladies. Now she breaks legs and steals hearts as WWE Diva of The Decade. All rise for Trish Stratus.

>> We heard that you used to enjoy football when you were younger – what position did you play?

Oh yes, I was a right defence. I was excellent, if I do say so myself.

>> Your earlier aspirations were to become a doctor – is this something you would still like to do later on in life?

Well, the problem is I don't have a time line. I don't know when wrestling's going to be over – the last few years have been a kind of see-as-we-go kind of process. I'm basically going to see where my career takes me. I still have a lot to do with the WWE, so we'll see.

>> What prompted the transition from manager to wrestler?

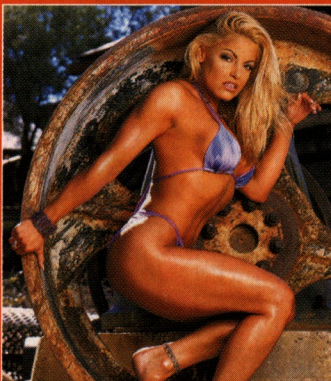
I knew I was capable of being more physical in the ring. I was already a valet and I wanted to increase my role a little bit more. I really had to do whatever they wanted me to do as a valet, as far as taking bumps. I think it was seeing my ability and my willingness that led them to going "ok". Test and Albert was obviously a big deal in my career, that was when I started out. I didn't really get into the ring that much until that story line. I guess the combination of that feud ended with me and Stephanie McMahon in No Way Out in 2002, which was one of my first pay per view matches. First singles match on PPV, from two people who are certainly not looked at as workers. We had such an awesome story line between us, we were both heels at the time. We had about 12 minutes for my first wrestling match and did a hell of a job.

>> You seem to have a liking for cowboy hats – is there a story behind this?
There is actually. I was backstage and

I was told I would be debuting. I needed two distinct outfits as I was going to be scouting both Test and Albert. So I went to the mall and found some cute little outfits and some cowboy boots and, as I was walking through, I saw a long jacket. I knew I wanted to have a distinct look, in the same way as, you know, Undertaker wears this and Kane wears this. I had a pink outfit and by coincidence I saw a pink hat and I thought that would be kind of neat, as it will match. Every week I would wear a different one.

>> What was it like performing in front of your home crowd at Wrestlemania 18 last year?

Oh, it was amazing! I thank my lucky stars that I was competing in a women's title match in my hometown. You know I could have just been a valet, and just watching from the sidelines. But to be at the stage of my career where I am competing and to be at home, where you know the reception is always warm, is tremendous. That was my moment, coming out with the maple leaf on my butt. I'm proud to be Canadian and I'm proud of my hometown.



>> Could you ever see yourself following in Chyna's footsteps and competing in the men's division?

No. You know there's no need to. Now we have our own division there are lots of fights and many strong competitors, which makes it so much easier when you are out there. Now we're really spending time getting out there and finding women and developing them. Lydia is a good example of that. She's starting out as a valet, her character is being developed, and so when it comes to her fighting people will have made up their mind on whether to support her or not.

>> You were recently named Diva of the Decade – that must be quite an honour?

Well, considering I've only been in the business for three years, it is quite an achievement to get Diva of the Decade. I accepted that award on behalf of all the Divas in the division because it was a big team effort. If there wasn't a women's division, I wouldn't have been able to have that many titles, or fights, or competitors. The Diva franchise has given us the ability to go out there and to do things that make us all unique. A big package makes the Diva nowadays: it's the magazines and the wrestling combined.

>> The word association game – what are your comments on the following wrestlers/Divas?

Jazz: Tough.

Lita: Extreme, can't wait 'til she's back in the ring.

Victoria: Crazy.

Fabulous Moolah: Ground Breaking, opened the doors for what I do today.

Jacqueline: Tough.

Golberg: Impactful.

Vince McMahon: Thank you.

PROFILE

NAME

Trish Stratus

CREDITS

WWE super babe Trish was voted "Diva of The Decade" despite only being part of the WWE for three years. Three times female champion of the year, Trish went from playing hockey in high school to appearing on covers of American muscle mags and has so far avoided higher shelf publications. Go girl!

OTHER STUFF

The Canadian-born bombshell is 27 years old and her real name is Trish Stratigias. And yes, her assets are DD. See them jiggle in WWE Smackdown! Here Comes The Pain....

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We're always first with the games you want to see (we had the world exclusive with WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain, Tony Hawk's Underground, Driver 3, Metal Gear Solid 3 and many more!) and every month we continue to bring you new, fresh, exclusive, unseen footage of the biggest titles around.

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FORWARD PLANNER >>

BEST STOCK UP ON THE LATEST GAMES. WHAT IF YOU RAN OUT OVER CHRISTMAS? YOU'D HAVE TO WATCH THE QUEEN. EURGH.

KEY
Most Anticipated

NOVEMBER 2003	GENRE	PUBLISHER
Air Force Delta Strike	Shooting	Konami
Backyard Wrestling	Fighting	Eidos
Battlestar Galactica	Shooting	Vivendi
Beyond Good & Evil	Action adventure	Ubi Soft
Bloody Roar 4	Fighting	Konami
Broken Sword: The Sleeping Dragon	Adventure	THQ
Crash Nitro Kart	Racing	Vivendi
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Fighting	Ubi Soft
Cy Girls	Action adventure	Konami
Dragonball Z: Budokai 2	Fighting	Atari
Dynasty Tactics 2	Strategy	Koei
Ghosthunter	Action adventure	Sony
Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone	Action adventure	EA
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	Sports	EA
Karaoke Stage	Dancing	Konami
Kya: Dark Lineage	Platform	Atari
Legacy Of Kain: Defiance	Action adventure	Eidos
Manhunt	Action	Rockstar
Maximo Vs Army Of Zin	Platform	Capcom
Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun	Shooting	EA
Mission Impossible: Operation Surma	Action adventure	Atari
MTX: Mototrax Featuring Travis Pastrana	Sports	Activision
NBA 2K4	Sports	Sega
Need For Speed Underground	Racing	EA
Pop Idol	Dancing	Codemasters
Premier Manager	Sports	Zoo
Prince Of Persia: The Sands Of Time	Action adventure	Ubi Soft
Pro Evolution Soccer 3	Sports	Konami
Project Zero 2: Crimson Butterfly	Action adventure	Tecmo
Ratchet & Clank 2: Locked & Loaded	Platform	Sony
Roadkill	Shooting	Midway
Rogue Ops	Action	Capcom
Secret Weapons Over Normandy	Shooting	LucasArts
Sniper Elite	Shooting	Wanadoo
SOCOM 2: US Navy Seals	Shooting	Sony
Spawn	Action adventure	Namco
Sphinx And The Shadow Of Set	Platform	THQ
SpyHunter 2	Shooting	Midway
Tak And The Power Of Ju Ju	Platform	THQ
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Fighting	Konami
Terminator 3: Rise Of The Machines	Action adventure	Atari
The Hobbit	Action adventure	Vivendi
The Lord Of The Rings: Return Of The King	Fighting	EA
The Simpsons Hit & Run	Action adventure	Vivendi
The X-Files: Resist Or Serve	Action adventure	Vivendi
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	Shooting	Ubi Soft
Tony Hawk's Underground	Sports	Activision
Total Club Manager	Sports	EA
True Crime: Streets of LA	Action adventure	Activision
Virtual On Marz	Fighting	Sega
Whiplash	Platform	Eidos
World Rally Championship 3	Racing	Sony
Worms 3D	Strategy	Sega
WWE SmackDown! Here Comes The Pain	Fighting	THQ

DECEMBER 2003	GENRE	PUBLISHER
Alias	Action Adventure	Acclaim
EyeToy: Groove	Dancing	Sony
Rolling	Sports	SCI
Sniper Elite	Shooting	Wanadoo
Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Action adventure	Sony
The Sims Bustin' Out	Strategy	EA
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	Shooting	Ubi Soft
Wrath Unleashed	Shooting	LucasArts

2004	GENRE	PUBLISHER
Ally of Justice	Action	Sony
Altered Beast	Action	Sega
Arc the Lad: Twilight Of The Spirits	Adventure	Sony
Area 51	Action	Midway
Bad Boys II	Action	Empire
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	Adventure	Vivendi
Battlestar Galactica	Action	Vivendi
Bulletproof Monk	Action	Empire
Call of Cthulhu: Tainted Legacy	Adventure	Headfirst
Call of Duty: Finest Hour	Action	Activision
Castlevania	Action	Konami

STUFF THE TURKEY. PLAY THESE

JINGLE BELLS MAY BE ringing, but it's the jingling change in your pocket that Johnny Gamesmaker wants to get his hands on in the run up to Christmas. Chances are these top quality games will get overlooked, though...

FULL THROTTLE

NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND

DUE November 2003

With *Gran Turismo 4* skidding off to March you'd be well advised to pick up this no-bull racer, soon as you can.



SING IT BACK

KARAOKE STAGE

DUE November 2003

At last, karaoke that can tell your sister just how rubbish she is at trying to sing like Britney Spears. Yes!



HE'S BEHIND YOU

GHOSTHUNTER

DUE November 2003

What would the festive season be without a ghost story? And this one has dead people trying to make you dead too. Bah humbug!



CHOCKS AWAY

SECRET WEAPONS OVER NORMANDY

DUE October 2003

Instead of watching *The Great Escape*, why not recreate the Battle of Britain in your living room after Christmas dinner? Your nan'll be well impressed.



2004	GENRE	PUBLISHER
Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest	Strategy	Ubi Soft
Cold Winter	Shooting	Vivendi
Conan: The Dark Axe	Action Adventure	TDK
Conflict: Missing Presumed Dead	Shooting	SCI
Cy Girls	Action	Konami
Dino Hunter	Action	Oxygen
Dororo	Action Adventure	Sega
Drakengard	Adventure	Square Enix
Drift Racer: Kaido Battle	Racing	Sammy
Driver 3	Racing	Atari
Dr Seuss' Cat In The Hat	Adventure	Vivendi
ESPionage	Action Adventure	Midway
Extremely Goofy Skateboarding	Sports	Buena Vista
Extreme Force	Action	Namco
Fahrenheit	Adventure	Vivendi
Fallout - Brotherhood of Steel	Action Adventure	Vivendi
Fame Academy	Dancing	Ubi Soft
Final Fantasy X-2	Adventure	EA
Final Fantasy XI Online	Adventure	Sony
Firefighter FD18	Action	Konami
Goblin Commandeer	Strategy	Jaleco
Gradius V	Shooting	Konami
Gran Turismo 4	Racing	Sony
Headhunter: Redemption	Action Adventure	Sega
I-Ninja	Action	Sony
Ice Nine	Action	BAM!
Killzone	Shooting	Sony
Knights Of The Temple	Action Adventure	TDK
Kunoichi	Action	Sega
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	Action Adventure	Eido
Lobo	Action Adventure	Kemco
Manhunt	Action	Take 2
Masters of the Universe	Action Adventure	TDK
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	Action	Take 2
Megaman X: Command Mission	Adventure	Capcom
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater	Action Adventure	Konami
Monster Hunter	Adventure	Capcom
MX Unleashed	Racing	THQ
My Street	Adventure	Sony
NARC	Action	Midway
NFL Street	Sports	EA
Nightmare Creatures 3	Action	Ubi Soft
Onimusha 3	Action Adventure	Capcom
Onimusha Blade Warriors	Action	Capcom
Operation: No Return	Action	Oxygen
Outrun 2	Racing	Sega
Powerdrome	Racing	Argonaut
Project Zero 2: Crimson Butterfly	Survival Horror	Wanadoo
Resident Evil: Outbreak	Survival horror	Capcom
Richard Burns Rally	Racing	SCI
Rise To Honour	Action	Sony
Risk: Global Domination	Strategy	Atari
R.Racing Evolution	Racing	EA
RPM Tuning	Racing	Wanadoo
R-Type Final	Shooting	Metro3D
Shining Lore	Adventure	Phantagram
Shrek 2	Action	Activision
Siren	Survival Horror	Sony
Shining Lore	Adventure	Phantagram
Sitting Ducks	Action	LSP
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	Action Adventure	THQ
Spider-Man 2	Action	Activision
Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow	Action	Ubi Soft
Spy vs Spy	Platform	TDK
Star Ocean: Till the End of Time	Adventure	Square Enix
Starcraft: Ghost	Action Adventure	Vivendi
Starsky and Hutch 2	Action	Empire
Stuntman 2	Action	Infogrames
The Fast And The Furious	Racing	Vivendi
The Movies	Strategy	Activision
The Suffering	Survival Horror	Midway
Thunderbirds	Action Adventure	SCI
Transformers Armada: Prelude to Energon	Action Adventure	Atari
Virtual On: Marz	Action	Sega
World Championship Pool 2004	Sports	Jaleco
X-Men: Legends	Adventure	Activision
Zanzarah: The Hidden Portal	Adventure	Xicat

1



3



2



4



UPGRADE

STUFF YOU MAY LOSE. AND THEN FORGET YOU EVER HAD.

1

THAT'S MY ARSE IN THE MIRROR

Eight megapixels. That's more pixels than, like, blades of grass on a football pitch. It also has a four-color Super HAD CCD and Carl Zeiss T* lens. If you know stuff about cameras you're probably impressed by that.

■ Cyber-shot F828 £899
■ Sony 08700 555 777

2

COMPUTER, ENHANCE SECTOR J7

Here's another possibility for our next new mobile after we stupidly and drunkenly lose ours again. We can't wait to play with its 4x zoom for a few weeks before its gone. Where do they all go? We've lost six this year.

■ ST55 £349 standalone
■ Siemens 0207 222 0722

3

DEMobilISE

Maybe we need to buy bigger phones instead of smaller ones? If we had a phone the size of a brick, it'd be such a burden carrying it around we'd just leave it at home and it wouldn't get lost. Please. Make them huge.

■ G60 £349
■ Panasonic 0208 208 9450

4

CREAMY SIEMENS

We love Fujitsu-Siemens. Mainly because of the word Siemens, but also because it makes silver things with rounded edges we'd like to have. Look at the edges on this. Look at the curve. Imagine whipping it out on the train.

■ Amilo D £1299
■ Fujitsu-Siemens 08705 353 325

5



7



6



8



5

GO BACK AND DO IT PROPERLY

Listen, 3, or Three, or whatever your stupid name is, we're not going to buy your video phones when they're this ugly. The NEC 808Y is a bit better, but it's hardly desirable, and not what we want to put on pub tables.

■ E808Y £50 +contract
■ Three 0207 365 2947

6

WOULD YOU LIKE AN EXTRA SET?

Looks a bit like a GameCube, but comes in a lot more useful and you don't have to wait years for stuff to get converted from Japan. It prints photos, directly from your camera too, so there's no "evidence" left on your PC.

■ A205s £299
■ Olympus 0207 253 2772

7

IT'S AN EX-Z4! RAISE THE SHIELDS

The EX-Z4. That's a man's name. That's a name a 35-year-old man raised on *Star Wars* thought up. See how it suggests futurism and power. You could fly to Mars in an EX-Z4. Or... just take photos of your cat doing cat things.

■ Exilim EX-Z4 £399
■ Casio 0208 450 9131

8

COPYING... 58 MINS REMAINING

160GB of storage via an Ethernet or USB2, meaning you no longer have to burn your porn onto a CD. Or is that just us? Should result in a shorter queue to access the office CD writer on Fridays.

■ Toughbook R1 £1499
■ Panasonic 08705 357 357

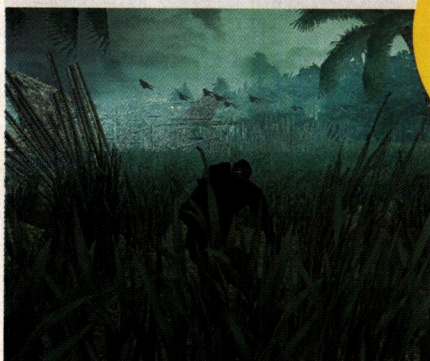
WHAT'S ON YOUR

PSW DVD



WE'VE GONE *SMACKDOWN!* CRAZY FOR THE THIRD MONTH RUNNING, PLUS THERE'S THE EXCLUSIVE EYE CANDY OF *MGS3*, *SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW* AND *GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM*. WOWSERS!

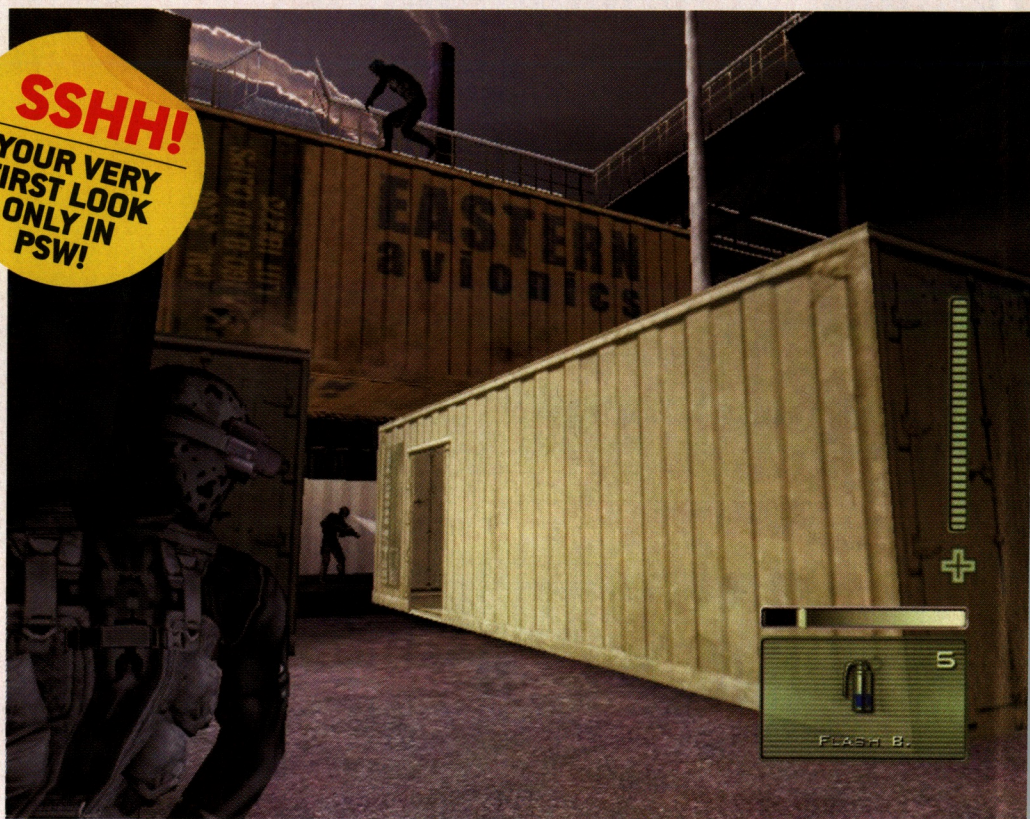
COVER GAME



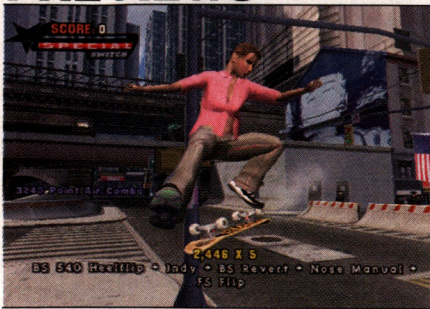
SPLINTER CELL 2

THIS TIME, SAM FISHER'S BROUGHT HIS FRIENDS.

Solid Snake has a new rival in the jungle next year, as Sam Fisher and his trademark night-vision goggles return for yet more triple-A stealth-based action. He's coming out of the slate-grey corridors and into the forest. And guess what? This time he's taking the battle online. For your very first look at *Splinter Cell 2* in action, report immediately to your PSW DVD.



PREVIEWS



TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND

Our Tone has become so streetwise he now wears trousers three sizes too big and calls skaters "sk8rs". See for yourself if you don't believe us.

REVIEWS



SSX3

Who cares about going *Underground* when you can whizz down mountains and stuff? And it's got super über moves. No, we're not making this up. Seriously.

NEWS



BATTLESTAR GALACTICA

Think you know what space looks like? You don't, mate. Space has got fighter pilots and robots and a huge battleship searching for home. It's all here.

DISK IN FULL

>> **SPECIAL FEATURES** Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun, WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain, WRC3 >> **EXCLUSIVES** Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm, Resident Evil: Outbreak, Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater, Project Zero 2: Crimson Butterfly, Sonic Heroes, Drakengard, Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow, Castlevania >> **NEWS** Bloody Roar 4, Battlestar Galactica, ESPN NHL Hockey, ESPN NFL Football, ESPN NBA Basketball >> **PREVIEWS** Secret Weapons Over Normandy, Tony Hawk's Underground, Destruction Derby Arenas, Bombastic, Rogue Ops, Roadkill, Ghost Hunter, Need For Speed Underground >> **REVIEWS** SWAT: Global Strike Team, Time Crisis 3, Club Football, Worms 3D, Ford Racing Evolution, Pro Evolution Soccer 3, Ratchet and Clank: Locked and Loaded, SSX 3, XIII, The Simpsons Hit & Run >> **CHEATS** Colin McRae Rally 4 >> **EXTRAS** Splinter Cell Platinum Review, Hitman 2 Platinum Review, Trailers: Lethal Skies 2, LEGO Bionicle, Motorsiege: Warriors of Primetime, Freaky Flyers, NHL Hitz Pro, Hot Wheels Highway 35 World Race, Scooby Doo! Mystery Mayhem, Super Farm, Metal Arms, Tokyo Games Show: Gran Turismo 4, Siren, Chaindrive, Maximo Vs Army of Zin, Onimusha Blade Warriors, Kunoichi.

EXCLUSIVES



METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

Watch Mr Snake do what he does best in some steamy jungles at the height of the Cold War. That's sneaking around and killing people, by the way.



SONIC HEROES

The game that's madder than a ferret's handbag has spun onto our DVD to delight your eyes. Warning: leave your sanity at the door for this one. Cheers.



GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM

The heat is well and truly on for our one-shot kill chums. Read the preview starting on page 26, then see Clancy's boys in action on the DVD. Sorted.

SPECIAL FEATURES



MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN

BARNSTORMING FOOTAGE THAT'S FULL OF EASTERN PROMISE.

You dribbled over our full hands-on last month. Now see for yourself why we got so excited over shooting lots of Japanese people. Our extra special footage features the new jungle levels, which are a definite departure for the series but should rival *Ghost Recon*, *Splinter Cell* and *Metal Gear Solid 3* for leaf-based, first-person shooter action. And then there's the much-hyped Pearl Harbour sequence; a stunning blitz of explosions, fires, sinking battleships, kamikaze planes and bullet-spewing gun-turrets. It's even more harrowing than *that other well-known MoH* opening sequence, so sit back and enjoy... or shit yourself silly.

WRC3

MCRAE MINDS HIS BACK.

WRC3 is probably the closest a rally game has come to knocking dour Scot, Colin McRae off his lofty perch. We'd say it might even wipe the smile off his face, if he ever relaxed his mouth muscles. Anyway, you don't have to take our word for it thanks to this ace footage taken from races in Monte Carlo and Turkey (the only new stage since *WRC2*). And they're both multi-angle features no less, allowing you to soak up the French Riviera in all its beautiful and sophisticated glory.



ESSENTIAL 50

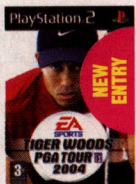
'ESSENTIAL' BECAUSE WE REALLY LIKE THEM. '50' BECAUSE THAT'S ALL WE COULD FIT ON THE PAGE.



PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 2
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #35
Officially the best thing ever. No other footy game even comes close.



TIMESPLITTERS 2
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #34
Still the king of multiplayer shooting, now with a quality single-player adventure.



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #47
The best golf game ever, now with God-like create-a-player feature. Brilliant.



NHL 2004
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #46
OK, so it's a Yank sport, but it's fast and playable and great for those with PES2 fatigue.



RTX RED ROCK
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #44
A third-person action adventure with a completely fresh feel. Great story, great game.



FORMULA ONE 2003
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #45
Coinciding with a revitalised Formula One season, Sony's latest F1 game is class personified.



GRAN TURISMO 3
■ RATED: 10/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #17
Everything you could possibly want from a driving game on one shiny disc. Remarkable.



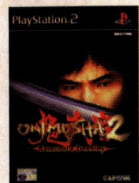
MUSIC 3000
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #41
The Music Generator series grows up with a very impressive package. One for DJs everywhere.



CRAZY TAXI
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #17
Superb conversion of the high-octane arcade game, packed full of extras for PS2 owners.



INDIANA JONES: EMPEROR'S TOMB
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #45
A lightweight, knock-around adventure featuring everyone's favourite whip fan.



ONIMUSHA 2
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #33
This gap used to contain Onimusha. Now it contains Onimusha 2. That's how mags work.



BURNOUT 2
■ RATED: 10/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #34
Nothing gets the adrenaline pumping quite like a game of Burnout 2. The best arcade racer ever.



JAMES BOND 007 IN... NIGHTFIRE
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #36
New missions, more girls, same rubbish driving sections and a great Bond story.



AMPLITUDE
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #46
Block-rocking beats and eye-straining visuals, the coolest music game returns with online play too.



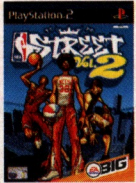
WRCII EXTREME
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #35
At last, PS2 has a rally game to be proud of. Stunning, realistic looks and exhilarating speed.



SSX TRICKY
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #23
So updated it's practically brand new – spectacular, colourful and undeniably hip.



DARK CHRONICLE
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #42
The Disney visuals game ever just got better! Even if you hate the sport, it's still a joy to play.



NBA STREET VOL. 2
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #41
The best basketball game ever just got better! Even if you hate the sport, it's still a joy to play.



SPLINTER CELL
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #40
Not quite as visually stunning as we were expecting, but Sam is still a fine alternative to Snake.



FREESTYLE METALX
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #46
Tony Hawk's with motorbikes instead of skateboards. You'll love the huge, free-roaming levels.



EYETO PLAY
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #44
Doesn't work as a single-player game, but as a party novelty it's the best. Superb "family" fun.



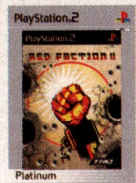
LORD OF THE RINGS: THE TWO TOWERS
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #35
Spectacular massed battles, cunning boss fights and astounding looks.



COLIN MCRAE RALLY 04
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #46
Colin is back with a better. The definitive rallying game for all petrol enthusiasts.



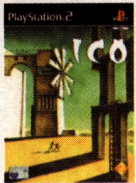
MGS2 SUBSTANCE
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #39
Same as the last game but without the boring bits. Only worth getting if you don't have MGS2.



RED FACTION 2
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #34
Terrific single-player shooter with the innovative geo-mod now genuinely playing a key role.



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SNOOKER 2003
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #44
Plays a fine game of snooker and boasts plenty of extra game modes too. Nice.



ICO
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #27
Chilled out adventure that challenges and puzzles without any need for violence.



PRIMAL
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #39
Lara, you now have some serious competition – this is the best game of its type on PS2.



MEDAL OF HONOR
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #30
It's like reliving Saving Private Ryan from the soldier's view. And out on budget now, too!



JAK II: RENEGADE
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #47
Platforming genius, let down slightly by the time-consuming wandering you're forced to undertake.



DEVIL MAY CRY
■ RATED: 10/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #22
Astonishing to watch and a blast to play. But boo to the sloppy big-bordered UK conversion.



SILENT HILL 3
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #42
The most disturbing and grotesquely beautiful Silent Hill yet. Plays much like the others though.



SOUL CALIBUR 2
■ RATED: 10/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #42
The prettiest, most accessible, most entertaining one-on-one fighter ever. You simply must own it.



VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #41
Virtua Fighter 4 gets a makeover in this fast, slick and absorbing update.



FINAL FANTASY X
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #29
The best Fantasy yet. Stunning looks and the tale isn't insultingly twee. Truly captivating.



LMA MANAGER 2003
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #35
Comprehensive, up-to-date, easy to navigate, totally engrossing and – shock – pretty, too.



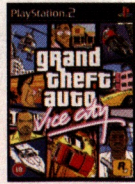
RATCHET & CLANK
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #35
Don't be put off by its kiddie looks. Combat is the key in this beautiful platforming romp.



WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #43
Wet and wild, this is a great variation on the extreme sports theme. Quality.



ZOE 2: 2ND RUNNER
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #46
Stunning giant robot fighting action and breathtaking visuals from the creator of Metal Gear Solid.



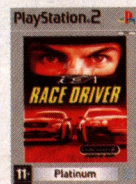
GRAND THEFT AUTO VICE CITY
■ RATED: 10/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #36
Bigger and better than GTA3 in every respect, Vice City is simply essential.



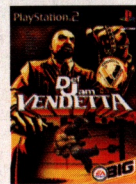
DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #42
Dance Dance Revolution on PS2. Catchy tunes and frantic dance action.



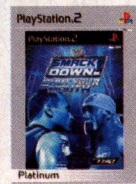
INDYCAR SERIES
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #43
An excellent simulation of the sport, but some may find it too 'American' for their palette.



Toca RACE DRIVER
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #32
The most fiercely competitive racing game on PS2. It's like GT3 without any of the boring bits.



DEF JAM VENDETTA
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #40
It's hip-hop arm breaks and beatings aplenty in this over-the-top yet excellent wrestling fest.



WWE SMACKDOWN! SHUT YOUR MOUTH
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #35
A little out of date now but still a great purchase for the casual WWE fan.



RYGAR
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #41
Sword and sandals aplenty in enjoyable update of the classic 80s arcade game. Remember that?



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #23
Fast, hard to master and full of beauty. Excellent replay value. Get it now.



TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #40
The third Tenchu in the series is a blast, but it still suffers from ropey graphics.



MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER
■ RATED: 9/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #44
A first-class shooter, this is PS2's answer to Halo. A great game for sci-fi fans.



ATV: OFF ROAD FURY 2
■ RATED: 8/10
■ ISSUE: PSW #46
The same as the last one, but still the best multiplayer racer you can buy.

BOND IS BACK!



"Tell me what's in next month's PSW Mr Bond or I will shave your balls. And you know how much that makes you itch."

"OK then Goldfinger. Just make sure you get them even this time. Remember: short on the front, long at the back."

TOP SECRET FILES ON *EVERYTHING OR NOTHING* ONLY IN YOUR NEXT PSW! WE REVEAL ALL!

EXCLUSIVELY ON THE NEXT PSW DVD...

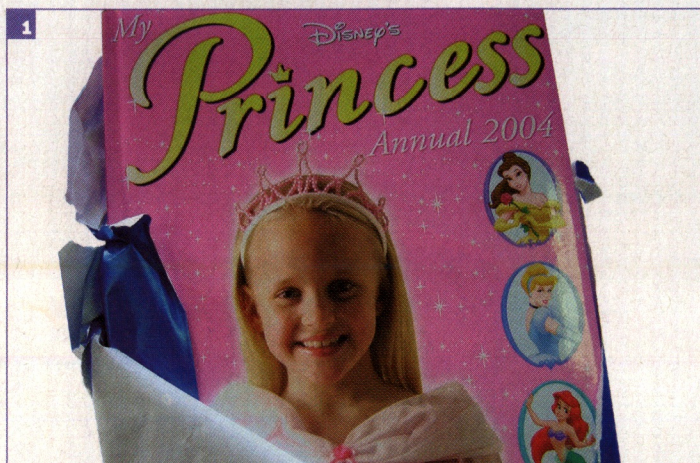
THE BIGGEST GAMES OF 2004 INCLUDING: JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING / KILLZONE / THE SIMS / SYPHON FILTER / GRAN TURISMO 4 / DRIVER 3 AND MORE!

ON SALE NOVEMBER 20. LICENSED TO THRILL.

CONTENT SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE

TOP 10

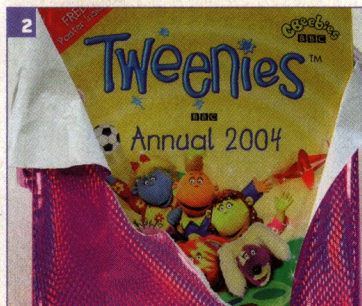
CHRISTMAS ANNUALS TO GIVE TO KIDS WHO DON'T DESERVE BATTERY-OPERATED GIFTS.



1 DISNEY'S PRINCESS ANNUAL 2004

Let's be honest with each other – there's a seven-year-old girl inside all of us. Why not make yours feel more at home by reading aloud from the *Princess Annual 2004*? Maybe then she'll stop doing the cat's cradle with your small intestine.

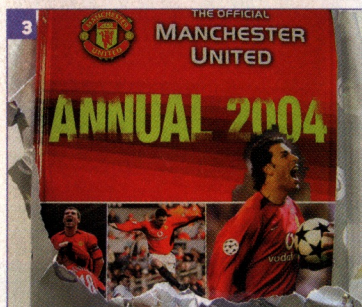
■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** You were adopted as a child. Mickey Mouse is your blood father and if you don't return to Disneyland to spend money and have a magical time, you shall be staple-gunned to a crucifix and force-fed elastic bands.



2 THE TWEENIES 2004

That smell of, like, fish or something you sometimes get from car exhausts. That taste, similar to orange peel only not, you occasionally get from pork rind. The inner workings of a hamster. Hundreds of things are impossible to describe. The Tweenies are numbered one to six.

■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** Climbing a ladder is an effective way to retrieve a dog stuck in a tree.



3 MANCHESTER UNITED 2004

Alex Ferguson, currently riding unicorns through the fields of Narnia with Frank Bruno, has lost his mind. Two words for you: "Diego" and "Forlan". Buy this book and you feed his addiction for clownish foreign footballers. Two more words for you: "Fabian" and "Barthez". So what are you waiting for? Buy this book.

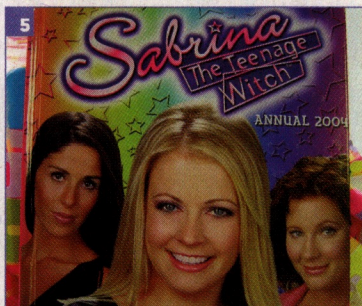
■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** The Super Devils are ace at footsy.



4 BARBIE 2004

An improvement over 2003's lacklustre compilation in every regard. Puzzle master Alan Black is back to something like his devastating best [his puppy-dog dot-to-dots are incendiary] while Faye Monkington's Barbie narratives sparkle with an exuberance not seen since her 1993 opus, *Dave Went Crabbing*.

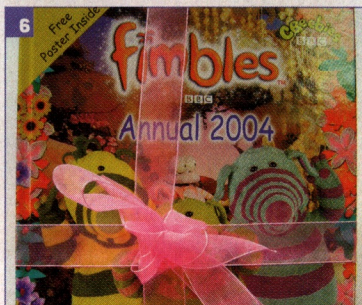
■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** Girls should be thin, blonde and white.



5 SABRINA 2004

The most erotic of all this year's annuals, *Sabrina the Teenage Witch '04*, leads you by the winkle behind the Wendy house on the promise of a groping that never comes. Ladies smile out at you from every page, suggesting bad things that will never happen.

■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** It would be really good to have sex with Sabrina the Teenage Witch.



6 THE FIMBLES 2004

Too stupid for *The Tweenies*? Find all those interweaving flashback plotlines too slippery for your meat-fisted brain to get a handle on? Then grin like you've just found a *Star Wars* Tazo in the hidden pocket of your fluorescent-yellow Campri ski-jacket and prepare to go snout-trotter with the Fimbles.

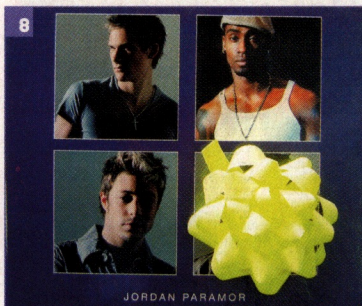
■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** Children have terrible taste in literature.



7 BUSTED 2004

The *Busted '04 Annual* condensed to exactly 50 words: Charlie has a Bart Simpson lava lamp beside his bed. James has had shelves put up in his bedroom. He now uses them to keep his "bits" on. Matt once had a dream about Samantha Mumba. In it, a number of his front teeth fell out. And guitars are cool.

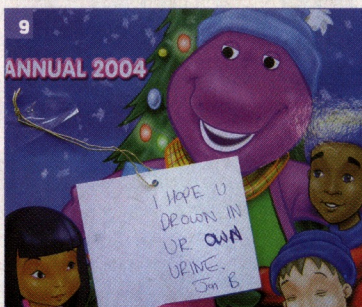
■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** One day, people might live under water.



8 BLUE 2004

We're no fans of the band Blue, but we are very keen on respected author Jordan Paramor, who's name adorns the cover of this weighty hardback tome. We've read all his other stuff, including the classic *Operating Your Sony DX-N43* and the timeless *Cadbury's Brunch Bar: The Average Nutritional Values*.

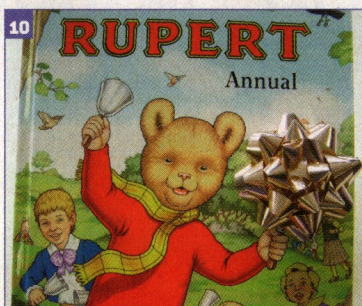
■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** Elton John is smaller than he looks.



9 BARNEY 2004

Two key questions left unanswered by this year's edition of the *Barney Annual*: 1) why doesn't Barney have any friends his own age?; and 2) how does he earn all his money? He never works, yet he seems to have endless rivers of cash with which to purchase kites and sailing boats. Verdict: pervert, tax-dodger.

■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** Dinosaurs use giant toothbrushes.



10 RUPERT THE BEAR 2004

Rupert the Bear is (probably) a racist. And not just any old racist either. He's (probably) one of those really brainy racists, like holocaust-denier David Irving, capable of making a plausible case that Auschwitz was actually just a butterfly farm with terrible working conditions and a crappy canteen.

■ **AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS...** Never fix an otter's clock with a twig.

CHEATS

UNLIMITED

A SIMPLE CALL AND

A SIMPLE CALL AND
YOU'VE GOT THE CHEAT

TOP WALKTHROUGHS PLUS OVER 10,000 CHEATS & TIPS

A = 0 1

Ace Combat 4: S. Skies
Ace Combat: D. Thunder
Activation Anthology
Aero Elite: C. Academy
Age of Empires 2
Agent Under Fire
Aggressive Inline
Airblade
Alex F's Player Man. '02
Alex F's Player Manager
Alien's
Aliens vs. Predator: Ext.
All Star Baseball 2002
All-Star Pro. Wrestling 2
Alone in the Dark 4
Alter Echo
American Pro Truckee
Amplitude
Angel of Darkness
Ape Escape 2
Arc the Lad: T. of Spirits
Armageddon (MDK2)
Armoured Core 2
Armoured Core 3
Army Men RTS
Army Men: Air Attack 2
Atlantis 3: New World
ATV Off-Road Fury 2
ATV Quad Racing 2
Auto Modelista

B = 0 2

Baldur's Gate: Dark All.
Bass Strike
Batman Vengeance
Batman: Rise of Shin Zu
Battle Engine Aquila
Big Mutha Truckers
BIG: NBA Street
BIG: SSX Snowboarding
BIG: SSX Tricky
Black and Bruised
Blade 2
BloodRayne
BMX XXX
Bombad Racing
Bond 007: Nightfire
Bond: Agent Under Fire
Bouncer
Bounty Hunter: Star Wars
Britney's Dance Beat
Buffy: Chaos Bleeds
Burnout
Burnout 2 Point of Impact

C = 0 3

Casper: Spirit Dimensions
Chamber of Secrets
Chaos Bleeds
Chaos Legion
Checkmate
Chris Edwards' Ag. Inline
Circus Maximus
Citizen Kabuto (Giants)
Clock Tower 3
Code Veronica X
Colin McRae Rally 3
Colin McRae Rally 4
Conflict Zone
Conflict: Desert Storm
Conflict Desert Storm 2
Contra: Shattered Soldier
Cr. Bandicoot: Wof. Cort.
Crazy Bump's: Car Bat.
Crazy Taxi
Cricket 2002

Crush Hour (WWE)
Cyprien's Chronicles

D = 0 4

Dakar 2
Dancing Stage Megamix
Dark Alliance
Dark Angel (J. Cameron)
Dark Cloud 2
Dark Mirror
Dave Mirra BMX 2
David Beckham Soccer
DBRMX: (D. D. Rev. 6)
Dead or Alive 2
Dead to Rights
Def Jam Vendetta
Delta Force: U. Warfare
Desert Storm (Conflict)
Desert Storm 2
Deus: Ex
Devil May Cry 2
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dino Stalker
Disaster Report
Disney Golf
Disney's Kingdom Hearts
Distant Thunder
Dot Hack
Downforce
Downhill Domination
Dr. Muto
Dracula Last Sanctuary
Dragonball Z: Budokai
Dragons: Ancient Gates
Dredd vs. Death*
Drome Racers
Dropship
Dynasty Warriors 2
Dynasty Warriors 3
Dynasty Warriors 3 XL
Dynasty Warriors 4

E = 0 5

Ecco the Dolphin
Eden, Project
Eggo Mania
Eighteen Wheeler
Elemental Force
Elite Force: Voyager
Emotion Type-S (Driving)
Emperor's Tomb
End Game
Enter the Matrix
Episode 1: Star Fighter
Escape Monkey Island
ESPN In. Track & Field
ESPN In. Truck Sports 0
ESPN NFL Football
Everblue 2
Evergreen
Evil Dead: F. of Boomstick
Evil Twin
Evolution Skateboarding
Evolution Snocross
Extinction
Extreme G 3
Extreme Racer
Eye Toy: Play

F = 0 6

F1 2002
Fatal Frame
Fellowship Of The Ring
FIFA 2001
FIFA 2002
FIFA 2003
FIFA 2004*
FIFA World Cup 2002

Rush Hour (WWE)
Cyprien's Chronicles
D = 0 4

Dakar 2
Dancing Stage Megamix
Dark Alliance
Dark Angel (J. Cameron)
Dark Cloud 2
Dark Legacy
Dave Mirra BMX 2
David Beckham Soccer
DDRMAX: (D, D. Rev. 6)
Dead or Alive 2
Dead to Rights
Def Jam Vendetta
Delta Force: U. Warfare
Desert Storm (Conflict)
Desert Storm 2
Deus-Ex
Devil May Cry 2
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dino Stalker
Disaster Report
Disney Golf
Disney's Kingdom Hearts
Distant Thunder
Dot Hack
Downforce
Downhill Domination
Dr. Muto
Dracula Last Sanctuary
Dragonball Z: Budokai
Draken: Ancient Gates
Dredd vs Death*
Drome Racers
Dropship
Dynasty Warriors 2
Dynasty Warriors 3
Dynasty Warriors 3 XL
Dynasty Warriors 4
E = 0 5

Ecco the Dolphin
Eden, Project
Ego Mania
Eighteen Wheeler
Elemental Force
Elite Force: Voyager
Emotion Type-5 (Driving)
Emperor's Tomb
End Game
Enter the Matrix
Enter the Matrix
Escape 1: Star Fight
Escape Monkey Island
ESPN Int. Track & Field
ESPN Int. Winter Sports 0
ESPN NFL Football
Everblue 2
Evergreen
Evil Dead: Eof Boomstick
Evil Twin
Evolution Skateboarding
Evolution Snocross
Extinction
Extreme G 3
Extreme Race
Eye Toy: Play
F = 0 6

F1 2002
Fatal Frame
Fellowship Of The Ring
FIFA 2001
FIFA 2002
FIFA 2003
FIFA 2004*
FIFA World Cup 2002

Fighting Fury
 Final Escape (SOS)
 Final Fantasy 10
 Finding Nemo
 Fire Blade
 Fisherman's Challenge
 Forever Kingdom
 Formula 1 2001
 Formula 1 2002
 Four by Four Evolution
 Freaky Flyers
Freedom Fighters
 Freestyle
 Freestyle BMX 2
 Freestyle Metal X
 Frontline (M. of Honor)
 Futurama
G = 07
 G1 Jockey
 Galarins: Ash
 Getaway
 Ghost Recon
 Giants: Citizen Kabuto
 Gitaroo Man
 Godai: Elemental Force
 GOLF: Swing Away
 Gridious 3 & 4
Gran Turismo 3
 Gran Turismo Concept
 Grand Prix Challenge
Grand T Auto: Vice City
Grand Theft Auto 3
 Grandia 2
 Grandia Xtreme
 Gravity Games
 Great Escape
 Green Rogue
 GTA 3
 GTA: Vice City
 GTC Africa
 Guilty Gear X2
 Gumball 3000
 Gundam: J to Jaburo
 Gungrave
H = 08
 Hack (Dot)
 Harry Potter C. of Secret
 Heavy: Call of the King
 Headhunter
 Headhunter Redemption
 Herdy, Gerdy
 High Heat Baseball 1 2000
 High Heat Baseball 2000
 Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
 Houdini Havoc
 Hot Shots Golf 3
 Hot Wheels: Velocity X
 HSX: Hypersonic Xtreme
 Hulk
 Hunter: The R. Wayward
I = 09
 In Cold Blood
 Incredible Hulk
Indiana Jones: E. Tom
 IndyCar Series
 Int. Superstar Soccer 2
 Int. Superstar Soccer 3
 Int. Track & Field
 Int. Winter Sports 2002
 ISS Pro Evolution
 Italian Job: L.A. Heist*
J = 10
 Jade Cocoon 2
 Jak & Daxter
 James Bond: Agent U.F.O.

James Bond: Nightfire
James Cameron D: Angel
Jedi Star Fighter
Jekyll & Hyde
JikkYOU World Soccer '00
JikkYOU World Soccer '01
Johnny Moseley Mad Triz
Jojo's Bizarre Adventure 2
Judge Dredd: D. v Death
Jurassic Park Op Genesis
Just Bring It
K = 11
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer
Kengo: M. of Bushido
Kessen 2
King of Fighters 2000
King of Route 66
Kingdom Hearts
King's Field: Ancient City
Knockout Kings 2002
L = 12
Lara Croft: Ang. of Dark.
Largo Winch
Leg. of Kain: B. Omen 2
Leg. of Kain: S. Reaver 2
Legaia: Dual Saga
Legend of Black Kat
Legends of Wrestling
Legends of Wrestling 2
Legion: Leg. of Excalibur
Legy Drome Racers
UMA Manager 2003
Loony Tunes Space Race
Lord of Rings 2 Towers
Lord of Rings: Fel. of Ring
Lotus Challenge
M = 13
Mace Griffin Bnly Hunter
Madden NFL 2001
Madden NFL 2002
Madden NFL 2003
Madden NFL 2004
Mark of Kri
Marvel vs Capcom 2
Mad Hoffman's Pro BMX 2
Matrix (Enter the)
Max Payne
Maximo
McGrath's S'cross World
Medal of Honor Frontline
Men In Black 2 Alien Esc.
2 Mercedes Benz Racing
3 Metal Gear Solid 1
3 Metal Gear Solid 2: Sub.
Micro Machines
Midnight Club
Midnight Club 2
Mike Tyson Boxing
Millionaire
Minority Report
MLB 2004
MLB Slugfest 2003
MLB Slugfest 2004
b Mobile Suit Gun.: Z.Fron
Mobile Suit Gun.Fv Zeon
Mobile Suit Gundam
Monkey Island (Escape)
Monster Jam Max. Destr.
Mort.Kombat: Deadly All
Moto GP
Moto GP 2
Moto GP 3
Mr Golf
Mummy Returns
reMusic 3000

MVP Baseball 2003
MX M2X
MX Rider
MX Superfly
Mystic Heroes
N = 14
NASCAR Thunder 2002
NASCAR Thunder 2003
Naval Ops: W. Gunner
NBA 2K3
NBA Live 2003
NBA Starting Five
NBA Street Volume 2
NBA Tonight 2002
NBA Tonight, ESPN
NCAA Football 2003
NCAA Football 2004
Need for Speed H.Purs.2
NFL 2001
NFL 2002
NFL 2003
NFL 2004
NFL 2K2
NFL Blitz 2002
NFL Gameday 2004
Nightrifle
No One Lives Forever
O = 15
Oni
Onimusha: Warlords
OO7 Agent Under Fire
OO7 Nightrifle
Op. Genesis Jurassic Park
Operation Winback
Operative (N.O.L.F.)
P = 16
Pac-Man World 2
Player Manager 2002
Premier Manager 2002
Pride Fighting Champ.
Primal
Prisoner of War
Pro Evolution Soccer
Pro Evolution Soccer 2
Pro Rally 2002
Project Eden
Project Zero
Pryzm: The Dark Unicorn
Q = 17
Quack Attack
R = 18
Raging Breath
Ratchet and Clank
Rayman 2: Revolution
Rayman 3
Rayman M
Real Pool
Red Faction
Red Faction 2
Reign of Fire
R.Evil: Code Veronica X
Resident Evil: Dead Aim
Return to C. Wolfenstein
Riding Spirits
Robot Wars
Robottech: Battlerock
Rocket Power Bch.Bandits
Rocky
Romance of 3 Kingdom 7
Rom. of Three Kingdoms 8
RTS: Army Men
RTX Red Rock
R-Type Final
Rune: Viking Warlord
Rygar: Legendary Adv.

Scooby Doo: 100 Frights
 Scorpion King
 Seek and Destroy
 Seven Blades
 Shadow Hearts
 Shadow of Memories
 Shadow Of Zorro
 Shadowman 2
 Shaun Palmer's S'boarder
 Shinobi
 Shox
 Silent Hill 2
 Silent Hill 3
 Silent Scope
 Silent Scope 2
 Silent Scope 3
 Simpsons' Skateboarding
 Sims
 Sly Raccoon
 Smackdown! 3: J. Bring It
 Smackdown! 4: Shut Y.M.
 Smash Court Tennis
 Smugglers Run
 Smugglers Run 2
SOCOM: US Navy Seals
 Soldier of Fortune
 SOS: The Final Escape
 Soul Calibur 2
 Soul Reaver 2
 Speed Kings
 Spiderman The Movie
Splitter Cell
 SpongeBob S'Pants: RFD
 Spy Hunter
 Spyro: Ent the Dragonfly
 SSX Skateboarding
 SSX Tricky
 Star Trek: Elite Force
 Star Wars Jedi Starfighter
 Star Wars: Bounty Hunter
 Star Wars: Racer Revenge
 Star Wars: Star Fighter
 Starsky & Hutch
 State of Emergency
 Street Hoops
 Stuntman
 Sum of All Fears
 Summer Heat Volleyball
 Summoner
 Summoner 2
 Super Bust A Move
 Super Trucks
 Superman S of Apokolips
 Syberia

T = 20
 Tarzan Freeride
 TD Overdrive
 Tekken 4
 Tekken Tag Tournament
 Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven
 Terminator: Dawn of Fate
 The Bouncer
 The Fellowship Of Ring
The Getaway
 The Great Escape
 The Hulk
 The Italian Job: L.A Heist
 The Mark of Kri
 3The Matrix
 The Mummy Returns
 The Scorpion King
 The Simpsons: Hit & Run
 The Sims
 The Thing

The Two Towers
 Theme Park World
 This is Football 2002
 This is Football 2003
 Thunderhawk: Op.
 Tiger Woods Golf 2001
 Tiger Woods Golf 2002
 Tiger Woods Golf 2003
Tiger Woods Golf 2004
 Time Crisis 2
 Time Splitters
 Time Splitters 2
 TOCA Race Driver
 Tom & Jerry: W of Whisk
 Tom Clancy: Ghost Recon
 Tom Clancy: Sum of Fear
 Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell
T. Raider: Angel of Drk.
 Tony Hawk's 3
 Tony Hawk's 4
Tony Hawk's Underground*
 Top Gun: Combat Zones
 Total Immersion Racing
 Turak: Evolution
 Twin Calibre
 Twisted Metal Black
 Ty the Tasmanian Tiger
U = 21
 Ult. Fr Champ: Throwdown
 US Navy Seals (SOCOM)
U = 22
 Vampire Night
 Velocity X - Hot Wheels
 Vice City, C.T.A.
 Victory Fighter 4: Evol.
 Virtua Tennis 2
 V-Rally 3
W = 23
 Wakeboarding Unleash.
 War of the Monsters
 Warriors of M & M
 Way of the Samurai
 Whirl Tour
 Wild Arms 3
 Wipeout Fusion
 Wolfenstein, Return to
 Wolverine's Revenge
 World Champ. Snooker 03
 World Rally Champ. 2 Ext.
 Worms Blast
 WRC: World Rally Champ
 Wreckless: Yakuza Miss.
 WWE Crush Hour
 WWE Smackdown! S.Y.M.
WWE Sm' down! HCTP*
X = 24
 XGRA*
 XIII (Thirteen)*
 X-Men 2: Wolverine's Rev.
 X-Men: Next Dimension
 Xtreme G3
Y = 25
 Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monst. 2
Yu-Gi-Oh! Z of Roses
Z = 26
 Zapper
 Zone of Enders: 2nd Run.
0-9 = 27
 007 Agent Under Fire
 007 Nightfire
 102 Dalmatians
 18 Wheeler
 2002 FIFA World Cup
 7 Blades
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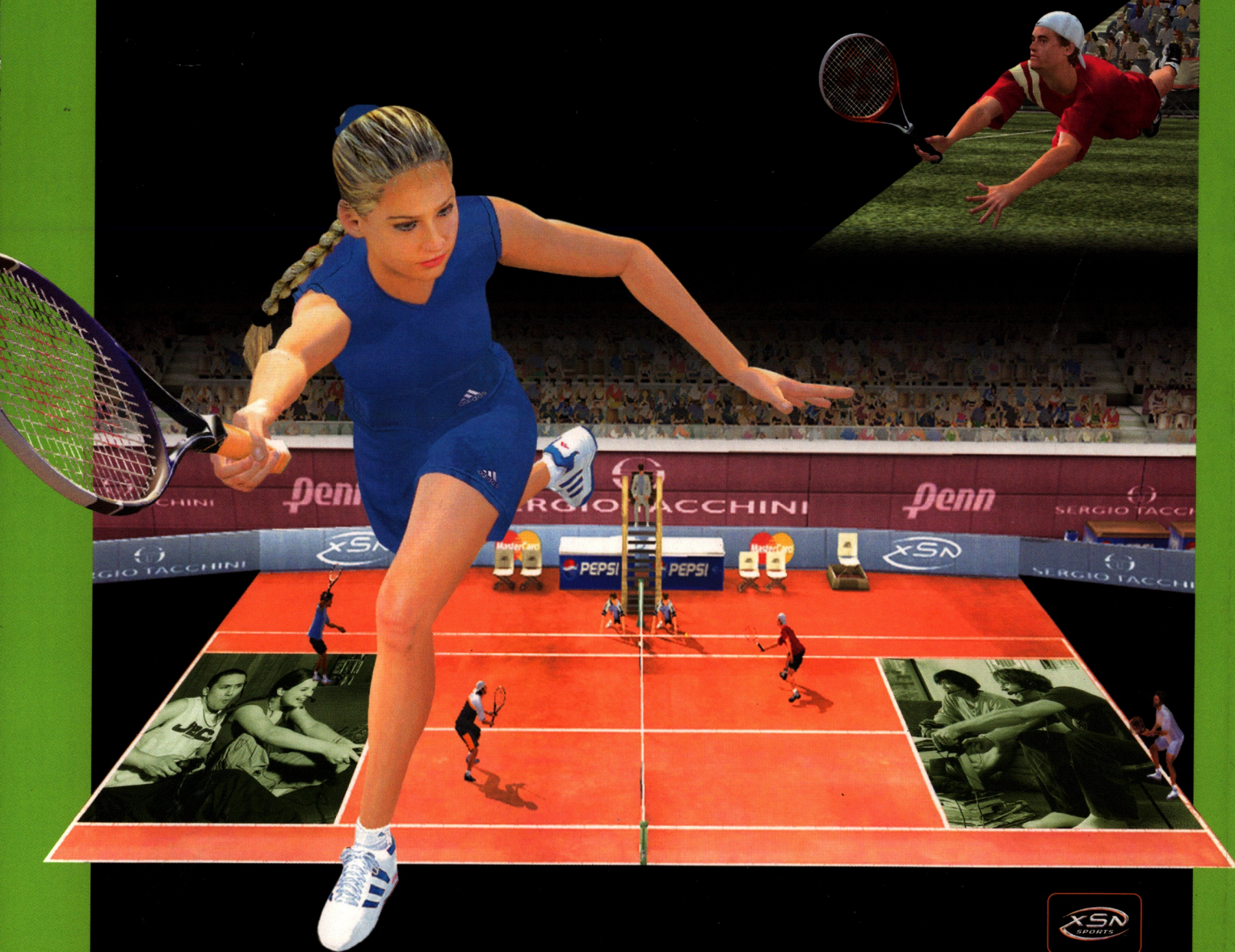
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